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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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State hikes DA for employees by 14% as Deepavali treat

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

The Karnataka government on Wednesday issued an order raising the dearness allowance for its employees from 12.25 per cent to 14.25 per cent of their basic pay, ahead of the Deepavali festival. The hike will also apply to pensioners, the finance department said. According to the order, the revised DA will be effective from July 1. This is the second DA increase in the current financial year. In May, the government had raised the DA from 10.75 per cent to 12.25 per cent of basic pay.enyan President William Ruto and other leaders mourned his death, praising his lifelong dedication to public service. *—PTI*

Online conversion of B khatas to A khatas goes lives

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar announced a 100-day campaign starting 1 November to convert B khatas to A khatas. "This scheme will benefit 15 lakh property owners in Bengaluru," Shivakumar said at Vidhana Soudha. "Properties up to 2,000 square metres come under the new scheme.... The corporation officials will come to the door step and offer conversion services if the owner of the property registers for conversion online by paying a registration fee of Rs 500. Property owners must pay a fee of 5 per cent of the prevailing guidance value for the conversion." He said a higher fee structure will be fixed after the 100 days. *—Salar News*

Pak announces 48 hour ceasefire with Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD/KABUL, 15 OCT

Pakistan said a 48-hour ceasefire has been agreed with Afghanistan, after fresh border clashes killed at least 50 people. "A temporary ceasefire has been decided between the Pakistani government and the Afghan Taliban regime, with the mutual consent of both parties, for the next 48 hours from 6pm today, at the request of the Taliban," the Foreign Office was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper. "During this period, both sides will make sincere efforts to find a positive solution to this complex but solvable issue through dialogue." Afghanistan did not immediately confirm it. *—PTI*

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India to host 2030 Commonwealth Games in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Ahmedabad was on Wednesday recommended as the proposed host of the 2030 Commonwealth Games by Commonwealth Sport's Executive Board, paving the way for the big event's return to India after two decades and bolstering its ambition to be an Olympic host in 2036. A final decision, will be taken on 26 Nov at the body's General Assembly in Glasgow after it is sent to the full membership of Commonwealth Sport. India had hosted the Games for the first time back in 2010 in New Delhi. Getting the Games' hosting rights would be a milestone in India's quest to become an Olympic host in 2036, also proposed to be conducted in Ahmedabad. *—PTI*

Delhi-NCR can light green crackers: SC

CJI says must take a balanced approach

The sale of green crackers will permitted from 18 to 21 October in the Delhi-NCR region *PHOTO: X*

SC'S KEY DIRECTIVES

- Sale of green crackers is permitted from 18 Oct to 20 Oct.
- Licences of manufactures shall be cancelled if there are any violations.
- The Central Pollution Control Board, and State Pollution Control Boards shall monitor the AQI in their respective jurisdictions starting from 14 Oct till 25 Oct and file a report each day.

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

In a significant relaxation ahead of Deepavali, the Supreme Court on Wednesday permitted the sale and bursting of green firecrackers in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) during the festival with certain conditions.

The court made it clear that the use of green crackers will be confined to specific hours on the day before Deepavali and on the festival day itself. However, the sale of green crackers will permitted from 18 to 21 October.

Allowing the joint request of the Centre and Delhi government, a bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran relaxed the ban on green firecrackers.

"We have to take a balanced approach, permitting it in moderation while not compromising with the environment," the CJI said. "Police authority to constitute patrolling teams to keep an eye that only permitted products with QR codes are to be sold. Violation notice to be attached for persons who violate the rules. Use of firecrackers shall be confined to 6am to 7am and 8pm to 10pm on the day before Deepavali and on Deepavali day."

- The Supreme Court said a total ban on firecrackers in the past had led to the smuggling of high-emission crackers and it caused even greater environmental harm.

The court had earlier this year banned the sale of green crackers in Delhi-NCR, but reversed its order now.

The bench said a total ban on firecrackers in the past had led to the smuggling of high-emission crackers and it caused even greater environmental harm.

"Conventional firecrackers are smuggled, which cause more damage," the CJI said while pronouncing the order.

It took note of data showing that despite earlier bans, the air quality index (AQI) in NCR districts did not show significant improvement, except during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

The eco-friendly firecrackers, developed with the assistance of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), reportedly reduce emissions of particulate matter and harmful gases by up to 30 per cent, the bench said.

The order said patrolling teams will be conducting regular checks on cracker manufacturers and their QR codes have to be uploaded on the websites. *—PTI*

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Prashant Kishor won't contest Bihar elections

PATNA, 15 OCT

Jan Suraaj Party (JSP) founder Prashant Kishor on Wednesday announced that he will not contest the Bihar Assembly polls, a decision, he claimed, was taken by the party for its greater good.

The former political strategist said that a "tally of less than 150 seats" for Jan Suraaj will be considered a defeat.

"If Jan Suraaj Party wins the Bihar polls, it will have a nationwide impact. The compass of national politics will point in a different direction," Kishor asserted.

The Bihar polls will be held in two phases, on 6 Nov and 11 Nov, and the counting will take place on 14 November.

"The party has decided that I should not contest the assembly polls. And therefore, the party has announced another candidate from Raghopur, against Tejashwi Yadav. It was a decision we took in the larger interest of the party. If I were to contest, it would have distracted me from the necessary organisational work", Kishor said.

JSP founder Prashant Kishor *PHOTO: PTI*

> **The NDA is definitely on its way out and Nitish Kumar will not return as Chief Minister**
>
> —Prashant Kishor, JSP founder

Asked what he thought of his party's prospects in the elections, the 48-year-old leader said, "We will be either win handsomely or receive a drubbing. I have been stating on record that I expect a tally of either fewer than 10 seats or more than 150 seats."

JSP has announced 116 candidates for the 243-member Bihar assembly. *—PTI*

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JD(U) announces first list of 57 candidates

PATNA, 15 OCT

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) on Wednesday announced its first list of 57 candidates for the upcoming assembly polls, with several ministers like Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Sharwan Kumar, and Madan Sahni among nominees. Ministers Ratnesh Sada and Maheshwar Hazari are also featured.

The list also included turncoats like Shyam Rajak, who returned to the JD(U), quitting RJD about a year ago, and don-turned politician Anant Kumar Singh, who had filed nomination papers from the Mokama assembly seat on Tuesday.

JD(U) state unit president Umesh Kushwaha has also been fielded from the Mahnar seat.

Kushwaha also filed his nomination papers on Tuesday.

Madan Sahni has been fielded from the Badaurpur assembly seat, Ratnesh Sada from Sonbarsa, Maheshwar Hazari from Kalyanpur, Vijay Kumar Choudhary from Sarairanjan, and Shrawan Kumar from Nalanda. *—PTI*

BJP releases second list of 12 candidates

The BJP on Wednesday released its second list of 12 candidates for the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls, fielding singer Maithili Thakur from Alinagar seat and former IPS officer Anand Mishra from Buxar. Ram Chandra Prasad will contest from Hayaghat seat, while Chhoti Kumari and Rakesh Ojha from Chhapra and Shahpur, respectively. Birendra Kumar and Mahesh Paswan will fight from two SC seats.

Restrictions lifted from Leh after 22 days

LEH/JAMMU, 15 OCT

Authorities on Wednesday lifted the restrictions in Leh district of Ladakh, 22 days after they were imposed following violence during the statehood protests that left four people dead and over 80 others injured. Six leaders, including a Congress councillor,were also released on bail on Wednesday.

The district administration had on 24 September promulgated prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in Leh, banning the assembly of five or more persons. No incident of violence had been reported since then, officials said.

"I do hereby withdraw the restrictions imposed vide this office order dated September 24 with immediate effect," District Magistrate Leh, Romil Singh Donk, said in an order.

The Senior Superintendent of Police, in a report, said that there is no imminent apprehension of breach of peace and public order and recommended withdrawal of the restrictions under Section 163 BNSS. Police had also arrested activist Sonam Wangchuk under the National Security Act on 26 Sept in connection with the protests. *—PTI*

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ZUBEEN DEATH CASE

A mob burnt some vehicles of the convoy carrying the five accused arrested in singer Zubeen Garg's death case as they were being moved to Baksa District Jail in Assam on Wednesday. Police resorted to lathicharge to disperse the mob, who were allegedly *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB* *>>>More on Page 4*

UK sanctions Nayara Energy over Russian ties

LONDON, 15 OCT

The UK government on Wednesday announced 90 new sanctions targeting Russia's oil giants and Indian petroleum company Nayara Energy Limited, which it said had imported billions of dollars' worth of Russian crude in 2024.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said the coordinated action with the UK Treasury will strike at the heart of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war funding, targeting companies to cut off oil revenues reaching the Kremlin.

It claimed the move will help take Russian oil "off the market" and choke off energy revenues that flow into Putin's "war chest" in the conflict with Ukraine.

"Four oil terminals in China, 44 tankers in the 'shadow fleet' transporting Russian oil, and Nayara Energy Limited – which imported 100 million barrels of Russian crude worth over USD 5 billion in 2024 alone – have all been hit by this latest wave of sanctions," it stated.

Earlier, Nayara Energy had been hit by European Union (EU) sanctions, a move it strongly condemned. The new UK sanctions directly target Russian oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil, described as two of the world's biggest energy companies which together export 3.1 million barrels of oil per day. *—PTI*

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6 MONTHS AFTER DEATH

City doc arrested for murdering wife with anaesthesia

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

A doctor was arrested for allegedly killing his wife in the City, after a Forensic Science Laboratory report that confirmed the presence of anaesthetic substance in her organs, six months after her death.

According to police, the case was registered on Tuesday following a complaint by businessman K Muni Reddy, 60, against his son-in-law Dr Mahendra Reddy GS, 31, alleging that he murdered his wife Dr Kruthika M Reddy, 28.

Kruthika is Muni Reddy's younger daughter.

Muni Reddy stated in his complaint that his daughter married Mahendra Reddy on 26 May, 2024, in Gunjur, Bengaluru. The couple then lived in Gunjur.

Mahendra then pressured her family to finance the construction of a large hospital, but instead, Muni Reddy said he set up a clinic named 'Skin & Scalpel' at Marathahalli.

Muni Reddy alleged that on 21 April, Mahendra administered intravenous (IV) medication to Kruthika at their residence, claiming it was for gastric discomfort. The next day, he left her at her parents' home, returning that night to give another IV dose.

On 23 April, Kruthika reportedly complained of pain from the IV site. Mahendra told her not to remove it.

Around 9.30pm, he went to her room to administer the medicine. The next morning, 24 April, Kruthika was found unresponsive. Mahendra allegedly did not perform CPR.

She was taken to a hospital, where she was declared dead on arrival. *—PTI*

Woman raped at knife point on Andhra train

HYDERABAD, 15 OCT

A 35-year-old woman was allegedly raped at knife point and robbed aboard a passenger train running between Guntur and Peddakurapadu Railway Stations of Andhra Pradesh, the railway police said on Wednesday.

She was in the ladies' coach and initially travelling alone.

The incident occurred on 13 October when the woman, belonging to Rajamahendravaram, boarded the Santragachi Special Express to travel to Charlapally.

When the train halted at Guntur Railway Station, an unidentified man, aged about 40 years, approached the coach and attempted to open the door.

Even after the complainant informed him it was a ladies' coach and tried to lock the door, he convinced her to open it, entered the coach and closed it from inside.

As the train was moving between Guntur and Peddakurapadu Railway Stations, the man allegedly threatened her with a knife and raped her, the complainant said.

The accused also beat her and stole a mobile phone and Rs 5,600 cash.

When the train was approaching Peddakurapadu Railway Station, the accused jumped off and escaped. The woman continued her journey to Charlapally and approached Secunderabad Government Railway Police to seek action.

A 'Zero FIR' (an FIR registered irrespective of place of crime) was registered. *—PTI*

3 Udupi students drown while fishing at sea

UDUPI, 15 OCT

Three schoolboys drowned while fishing off the coast near Byndoor's Kirimanjeshwara village on Tuesday. As per the police report, the tragedy occurred at the Hossahitlu beach, where four local boys had gone on Tuesday evening to play volleyball. After the game, they decided to cast fishing lines into the sea. Unaware of the depth and strength of the waves, three of them were swept away by the current, while one managed to swim ashore and alert nearby fishermen. Despite immediate rescue efforts, the boys could not be saved. The victims are Ashish Devadiga, a Class 9 student of Kirimanjeshwara High School; Suraj Poojari, 16, a Class 10 student from the same school; and Sanket Devadiga, 18, a second-year PU student at Byndoor PU College. Authorities have urged coastal visitors to remain vigilant, warning that sudden rip currents and shifting tides can make even familiar waters perilous. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

Missing Kolar teacher found dead in tank

KOLAR, 15 OCT

A 53-year-old teacher engaged in the State Government's socio-economic survey was found dead in a tank near Iyapalli village in KGF taluk of Kolar district, on Wednesday. The deceased, Akthira Begum, an assistant mistress from KB Hosahalli village in Kolar taluk, had gone missing on Monday after leaving home for survey work. When she did not return, her family and colleagues searched for her and later lodged a missing complaint with Kolar police. Begum reportedly left home without her mobile phone or survey kit, fuelling speculation. Sources said she had expressed stress over the workload. Around noon on Wednesday, her body was spotted in a tank by local cowherds. Radhamma, Bloc Education Officer said the teacher had previously asked the villagers about the tank. *—Salar News*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support

3 appointed as State Information Commissioners

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

Governor Thawarchand Gehlot has appointed three new State Information Commissioners under the powers conferred by Section 15(3) of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The newly appointed Commissioners are: Richard Vincent D'Souza – Bengaluru Bench; B Venkat Singh – Kalaburagi Bench; and Mahesh Walwekar – Bengaluru Bench. The appointments were officially notified on 15 October, 2025. According to the notification, the terms and conditions of service for the new Commissioners will be governed by Section 16 of the RTI Act, 2005, and the RTI (Terms of Office, Salaries, Allowances and Other Conditions of Service) Rules, 2019. *—Salar News*

K'taka mulls supermarkets for govt employees

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

Karnataka Large and Medium Industries Minister M B Patil on Wednesday said the government is considering a proposal to establish supermarkets for its employees through the state-owned Mysore Sales International Limited (MSIL), modelled on police and army canteens.

INOX TO INVEST IN KOPPAL

He also said that InoxWind, a manufacturer of large blades and towers for the wind energy sector, will set up a new facility in Koppal at Rs 400 crore, creating around 1,000 direct jobs. He said the facility will be located in the Kyadigoppa Industrial Area of Koppal. *—Salar News*

Fix infra or we won't pay tax: B'luru citizens

Partial white-topping, stormwater drain work irk residents

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

A citizens' forum has urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to stop property tax collection in parts of Bengaluru, alleging severe negligence in civic works that has led to flooding, potholes, and unsafe roads.

In a letter dated 13 October, the Individual Tax Payers Forum, representing residents of Varthur-Balagere-Panathur, appealed for immediate intervention, citing "unscientific and incomplete" white-topping and stormwater drain works by municipal bodies.

The forum blamed recent flooding, including on 10 and 11 October, on a lack of a connected stormwater drainage network leading to Varthur Lake.

Despite the Chief Minister's visit on 27 September, the forum said officials "ignored planning and resorted to shortcuts."

"Instead of completing the drainage network, authorities have rushed into pothole filling and white-topping. This will worsen road conditions and waste public funds," the letter noted, adding that the recently repaired Panathur Main Road is already waterlogged due to faulty sloping.

The forum demanded a scientific audit of all drainage and road works, completion of a proper drainage network before any new road works, and accountability among municipal staff and contractors.

"Namma Bengaluru is globally recognised as India's IT hub, but civic negligence is damaging the city's image," the letter stated, warning that Bengaluru is fast becoming known as the "Pothole City" and "No Footpath City". "If the Greater Bengaluru Authority cannot ensure basic infrastructure, it should not collect property tax from us," the forum asserted. *—PTI*

A pothole near Gopala Gowda Circle in Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru, poses a danger to motorists as they drive around it with difficulty **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

DKS urges industry leaders to stop 'hurting' Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday urged industry leaders not to "hurt" Bengaluru and Karnataka with constant criticism over infrastructure issues.

Responding to growing backlash over traffic snarls and poor roads, Shivakumar, who also oversees Bengaluru Development, asked business figures to show patience and remember the city's role in their success.

"Where were they 25 years ago? It is this Bengaluru that has given them everything," he said. "If they want to blackmail or threaten us on social media, it's left to them."

Shivakumar highlighted new infrastructure plans, including Rs 1,673 crore retained by East Bengaluru Corporation for direct improvements in 50 IT corridor wards.

A Corporate Social Responsibility policy is also being formulated to track contributions.

Addressing Biocon chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's remarks on poor roads and garbage, Dy CM Shivakumar said, "This is not China. We have democratic processes; no one will allow their own property to be demolished for road widening."

He insisted Karnataka remained unmatched in innovation, talent, and infrastructure.

"Forget the root, and you will not get the fruit. The root is Bengaluru and its people," he added. *—PTI*

CM hints at cabinet change after Bihar polls

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday dismissed speculation about a 'November revolution' or leadership change in the state, asserting there were no such calls within the Congress. He, however, indicated that a cabinet reshuffle could be considered after the Bihar elections.

"Let's see, after the election is over," Siddaramaiah told reporters when asked about the possible reshuffle. He clarified that the dinner meeting he hosted for his cabinet colleagues on Monday had nothing to do with leadership change or politics. "We regularly meet for dinner and discuss party matters. There has been no discussion on leadership change," he said.

The meeting had triggered speculation about a possible change of guard when the Congress government reaches the halfway mark of its term in November, referred to by some as a 'November revolution.'

Siddaramaiah shot back, "There is no kranti (revolution), no branti (delusion)."

Asked about the Congress high command's silence, he said, "They are concentrating on the Bihar elections. We will go by whatever the high command says."

Party sources said any reshuffle would reaffirm Siddaramaiah's authority as Chief Minister and counter speculation favouring Deputy CM DK Shivakumar.

Two cabinet berths remain vacant following the resignation of B Nagendra over allegations of embezzlement at the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki ST Development Corporation and the sacking of KN Rajanna from the cabinet.

Siddaramaiah also reiterated his intent to complete a full five-year term, stating, "No one can become CM without the support of the majority legislators and the blessings of the high command." *—PTI*

'I'm out of CM race,' says Satish Jarkiholi

Mysuru, 15 Oct

PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi, a key Scheduled Tribe leader, on Wednesday dismissed speculation about a leadership change in Karnataka, stating he is "out of the chief minister race." Speaking in Mysuru, he said, "There's no November revolution in Congress – it's all media creation." He added the issue has not been discussed at the party level and clarified that any decision on a Dalit CM would be taken by the Congress high command. *—Salar News*

Karnataka to curb disturbing activities by all bodies: CM

HASSAN, 15 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said the Karnataka government intends to restrict activities of not only the RSS but any organisation that causes disturbance at schools, public premises, or parks. He added that officials are studying measures taken by neighbouring Tamil Nadu in this regard.

He had earlier stated on Monday that he had directed the Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh to examine Tamil Nadu's actions regarding the ban on RSS activities on government premises.

"Not only RSS, but any organisation should not do anything that disturbs others at schools, public premises, and parks. TN has taken steps to this effect. We are gathering information on what TN has done," Siddaramaiah told reporters in response to a question.

> **Not only RSS, but any organisation should not do anything that disturbs others at schools, public premises, and parks. We are gathering information on what Tamil Nadu has done**
>
> -Chief Minister Siddaramaiah

The remarks follow a recent appeal by Minister Priyank Kharge, who urged Siddaramaiah to impose a ban on all RSS activities in government institutions and public premises across the state, saying such actions are contrary to India's unity and the spirit of the Constitution.

In a letter to the CM dated 4 October, Kharge, son of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, alleged that the RSS has been conducting its 'shakhas' in government and government-aided schools, as well as on public grounds, where "slogans are shouted and negative ideas are instilled in the minds of children and youth." *—PTI*

PRIYANK GETS ABUSIVE CALL, CM SAYS WILL INCREASE SECURITY

BENGALURU/MYSURU, 15 OCT

Minister Priyank Kharge on Wednesday shared a video of an abusive call he received, allegedly from an RSS supporter, after he demanded a ban on RSS activities in government institutions.

In the video, the caller is heard hurling casteist and derogatory abuse. Kharge questioned whether such behaviour is taught in RSS shakhas and if leaders like PM Modi and Mohan Bhagwat endorse it.

"This is a glimpse of the filth being filled in young minds," Kharge posted on X. "Our fight is not against individuals but against the dangerous ideology polluting innocent youth."

He vowed to protect youth from radicalisation, urging the spread of teachings by Buddha, Basava, and Ambedkar to counter extremism.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah backed Kharge, stating his government is taking the threat seriously and his security will be increased.

"What is wrong in the minister's letter? He has only asked for a ban on RSS activities in government spaces, like Tamil Nadu," the Chief Minister said in Mysuru.

He confirmed that Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh has been tasked with reviewing Tamil Nadu's approach. "Once we receive the report, we will take a decision," he added.

On BJP criticism, Siddaramaiah said the party had issued similar threats before the polls but was decisively defeated. *—Salar News*

Rs 300 cr crop loss relief by 30 Oct: Khandre

BIDAR, 15 OCT

Forest, Biology and Environment Minister and Bidar District In-charge Eshwar B Khandre on Tuesday announced Rs 300 crore will be disbursed by 30 October as compensation for last month's heavy-rain crop losses, including the additional Rs 8,500 per hectare announced by the Chief Minister.

At a Karnataka Development Programme meeting, Khandre directed tahsildars of affected taluks to record damages on the official relief portal by Wednesday evening and expedite payments.

Rs 170 crore has already been released under NDRF and SDRF norms, with the balance cleared before Deepavali.

Reprimanding Basavakalyan, Bhalki, and Bidar tahsildars for delays in house damage relief, he warned of disciplinary action and ordered pending cases settled within 24 hours.

He emphasised transparency, directing public display of relief data, and instructed the Agriculture Department to invoke the Mid-Season Adversity clause.

Minister Khandre also ordered covered power-line conductors. *—Salar News*

Police beats up Dalit man, suspended

KOPPAL, 15 OCT

A PSI in Koppal district was suspended for allegedly assaulting a Dalit man and hurling casteist slurs inside a police station.

Gururaj T, PSI at Kukanur Police Station, was suspended with immediate effect on Tuesday night after Galappa Hiremani (34), a resident of Yalamageri village, lodged a complaint accusing him of physical assault and caste-based abuse.

Galappa, who had visited the station to help mediate a family dispute involving his relatives, alleged that the officer verbally abused him saying, "You Dalits work for Rs 500 doing menial jobs; I don't need to learn from you," before physically assaulting him.

The incident triggered a spontaneous protest by Dalit leaders and community members outside the police station. Despite efforts by Circle Police Inspector Mauneshwar Patil and Deputy Superintendent of Police Muttanna Savargol to pacify them, protesters refused to disperse until the PSI was suspended or booked under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Savargol confirmed that CCTV footage showed inappropriate behaviour by the officer.

As tensions escalated, SP Ram L Arasiddi and Additional Superintendent of Police Hemant Kumar reached the spot, followed by a phone call from IGP Vartika Katiyar urging calm. After reviewing footage, the officer was suspended. *—Salar News*

CITY TEACHERS PROTEST

Members of the Karnataka State Primary School Teachers' Association protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Wednesday, urging the government to revise salaries of senior and lower primary school teachers as per the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations. In the background, a protester is seen holding a photo of a deceased teacher **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

FOR PROFITABLE AGRI

Sitharaman inaugurates farmer training centre in Koppal

KOPPAL, 15 OCT

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday urged farmers to fully utilise the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises and Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana for profitable, sustainable agriculture.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Farmers' Training and Common Facility Centre in Koppal, she said over Rs 3,700 crore has been disbursed to states since 2020, with Rs 11,000 crore in loans sanctioned to farmers, creating more than one lakh agri-entrepreneurs. "A Rs 24,000 crore allocation has been made for PMDDKY in 2025–26. Koppal will be a key beneficiary," she added.

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visits Hampi **PHOTO: SALAR**

Sitharaman noted 43 lakh farmers in Karnataka benefit from the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi and said new GST reforms have reduced taxes on farm equipment, bio-pesticides, and solar machinery.

The NABARD-backed facility, set up with state support and her MPLAD funds, will process 840 tonnes of mango and 600 tonnes of papaya, FSSAI-certified. "A good step to improve lives of 'annadata' in Koppal," she said.

Later in Hampi, she prayed at Virupaksha temple and urged restoration of UNESCO monuments. *—PTI*

DON'T USE PREGNANCY AS EXCUSE NOT TO WORK: CONG MLA

DAVANGERE, 15 OCT

Congress MLA Shivaganga Basavaraj sparked outrage after making derogatory remarks against a woman forest officer who was absent from a Karnataka Development Programme (KDP) meeting due to pregnancy.

During the quarterly meeting, the Channagiri MLA questioned Range Forest Officer Shweta's absence, saying, "She says she's pregnant when asked to attend meetings. But is she not pregnant when she comes to collect her salary?" He further commented, "If you are pregnant, take maternity leave. Don't you feel ashamed to keep saying this?"

Basavaraj's remarks triggered sharp criticism on social media and among the public, with many accusing him of being insensitive towards pregnant women and undermining maternity rights. Several demanded disciplinary action from the Congress leadership.

Attempting damage control, Basavaraj later clarified that his remarks were not aimed at insulting women. He said his concern was about administrative work being affected due to her absence, and that a representative from her department could have attended the meeting.

Former Belagavi Congress president Vinay Navalgatti said Basavaraj's intent was not to demean women.

However, BJP state convenor Sanjay Patil said it's Congress's "mindset towards women." *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Rs 34 crore cash, liquor and drugs seized in Bihar

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, enforcement agencies have seized cash, liquor, drugs, and freebies worth Rs 33.97 crore to prevent voter inducement. The state will vote in two phases on 6 and 11 November, with counting on 14 November. Since the polls were announced on 6 October, expenditure observers have been deployed to monitor candidates' spending and coordinate with monitoring teams. Flying squads, surveillance units, and video teams are working round-the-clock to detect misuse of money or other inducements. The Election Commission has also launched the online Election Seizure Management System (ESMS) for real-time reporting. Authorities were urged to conduct checks without causing inconvenience to ordinary citizens. —*PTI*

Sri Lankan PM to visit India from 16-18 October

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya will visit India for three days from Thursday, her first trip since taking office. She will meet Indian leaders to discuss bilateral issues, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. Her visit follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Sri Lanka six months ago and continues regular high-level exchanges, strengthening India–Sri Lanka ties, the MEA added. "It will reinforce friendship, supported by India's MAHASAGAR Vision and Neighbourhood First policy," the statement said. Amarasuriya will deliver a keynote at the NDTV World Summit, visit IIT Delhi and NITI Aayog for education and technology collaboration, and attend a business event to boost commercial ties. —*PTI*

HC relaxes Karti's foreign travel restrictions

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday relaxed bail conditions for Congress leader Karti Chidambaram in the INX Media corruption case. Previously, he needed trial court permission to travel abroad; under the revised order, he must notify the trial court and investigating agencies two weeks before any foreign travel and provide a full itinerary.Justice Ravinder Dudeja directed Karti to attend all trial proceedings and avoid delaying the case. The CBI opposed the change, citing fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya, but Karti's counsel argued he is an MP and not a flight risk. Karti was granted bail in 2018 following allegations that INX Media received Rs 305 crore overseas in 2007.—*PTI*

Centre raises aid by 100% for ex-jawans

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a 100 per cent increase in financial assistance for ex-servicemen and their dependents under various welfare schemes, the defence ministry said on Wednesday. The penury grant has been doubled from Rs 4,000 to Rs 8,000 per month per beneficiary, providing sustained lifetime support to aged and non-pensioner ex-servicemen (ESM) and their widows above 65 years of age with no regular income. The education grant was increased from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 per month per head for up to two dependent children (class I to graduation) or widows pursuing a two-year postgraduate course. The marriage grant was raised from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1,00,000 per beneficiary. —*PTI*

Cracks appear in NDA over seat sharing

RLM Chief unhappy with 6 seats; Flies to Delhi to meet Shah & later says 'all is well'

PATNA, 15 OCT

Expressing dissatisfaction over the seat-sharing arrangement within the ruling NDA in Bihar ahead of the assembly polls, Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) chief and Rajya Sabha MP Upendra Kushwaha on Wednesday said that nothing was well in NDA.

Kuswaha left for Delhi on Wednesday to meet senior BJP leaders. After a meeting with Union Home Minister, Amit Shah he said that everything was well.

According to party insiders, Kushwaha is not happy with the six seats allotted to his party. He is also not happy with the allocation of the Mahua seat to another NDA constituent, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), headed by Union Minister Chirag Paswan.

Upendra Kuswaha left for Delhi on Wednesday to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah PHOTO: PTI

Efforts to convince Kushwaha by senior BJP leaders in Patna failed to make any headway.

Union Minister Nityanand Rai and other state BJP leaders met Kushwaha here on Tuesday evening.

NDA leaders had on Tuesday claimed that seat allocation among alliance partners had been settled amicably and that discussions were in the final stages.

However, discontent among smaller allies surfaced soon after.

According to the agreed formula, the BJP and JD(U) will contest 101 seats each, LJP (Ram Vilas) 29 seats, while Hindustani Awami Morcha (HAM) and RLM will field candidates in six constituencies each.

Both HAM, led by Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, and RLM have voiced displeasure over the arrangement.

In an earlier post on X, Kushwaha apologised to his party workers after the formula was announced.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday interacted with party's booth-level workers through the NaMo app, asking them to work in support NDA. During the Mera Booth Sabse Majboot programme, Modi said 'Ekjut NDA, Ekjut Bihar.' He appealed them to ensure the victory of candidates of BJP allies. —*PTI*

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BJP tries to woo Alinagar youth with Maithili's fame

PATNA, 15 OCT

BJP on Wednesday named popular folk singer Maithili Thakur as its candidate from the Alinagar assembly seat, just two days after she joined the party.

The move is seen as a strategic effort to tap into her popularity among youth, particularly in the culturally significant Mithilanchal region.

Born in Madhubani, Bihar, on 25 July 2000, Thakur later moved to Najafgarh, Delhi, where her family faced financial struggles after her father, a classical musician, lost his job. Under his mentorship, Maithili honed her skills in Indian classical and Maithili folk music, performing alongside her brothers Ayachi and Rishabh.

Despite early setbacks on reality shows like 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li'l Champs' and 'Indian Idol Junior', she rose to fame as the first runner-up in Rising Star (2017). Her soulful folk renditions on social media cemented her as a digital icon, amassing millions of followers.

She reportedly earns Rs 5–7 lakh per live show, with a net worth in crores. Though she distanced herself from Bollywood following Sushant Singh Rajput's death, she returned in 2024 with "Kisi Roz" in Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha.

Maithili Thakur received the National Creators Award from Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the age of 23 in 2024 PHOTO: PTI

Thakur was awarded the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar (2021) for her contributions to folk music.

The BJP list also features nine women, including Minister Renu Devi and MLA Shreyasi Singh. Minister Mangal Pandey will contest from Siwan, while ministers Nitin Nabin from Bankipur, Nitish Mishra (Jhanjharpur), Krishna Kumar Mantoo (Amnour) and Prem Kumar (Gaya Town) were also named in the list. Former deputy chief minister Tarkishore Prasad will contest from Katihar seat.` —*PTI*

JD(U) snipes seats eyed by Chirag Paswan

PATNA, 15 OCT

Tensions have emerged within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Bihar after the Janata Dal (United) [JD(U)] released its first list of candidates, triggering discontent from Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ramvilas) [LJP(RV)].

The JD(U)'s list included several constituencies reportedly sought by the LJP(RV), such as Sonbarsa, Morwa, Ekma, Rajgir, Matihani, and Gaighat. JD(U) named Ratnesh Sada, Vidyasagar Nishad, Dhumal Singh, Kaushal Kishore, Rajkumar Singh, and Komal Singh, respectively, for these seats.

This has intensified friction within the alliance, despite LJP(RV)'s improved bargaining power after winning all five Lok Sabha seats it contested earlier this year. The party, which had contested over 130 seats independently in the 2020 Assembly polls and won just one, has now secured 29 seats in the NDA's seat-sharing formula. Under the final agreement, JD(U) and BJP will contest 101 seats each, LJP(RV) 29, and allies RLM and HAM six seats each.

The JD(U) conceded only two seats to LJP(RV), Tarapur and Teghra, while reclaiming Kahalgaon from the BJP in exchange. Sources said the BJP retained several high-profile constituencies like Danapur, Lalganj, Hisua, and Arwal, refusing to hand them to LJP(RV).

Eventually, LJP(RV) was allotted BJP-held Govindganj and contested Brahmapur, where its candidate Hulas Pandey received the party symbol. —*PTI*

Bizman's bubble burst: NDA mocks Kishor

PATNA/DELHI, 15 OCT

The BJP, JD(U) and RJD on Wednesday mocked Jan Suraaj Party founder Prashant Kishor's decision not to contest the upcoming Bihar assembly elections, saying he has realised that the "situation is not in his favour".

RJD said "he has accepted defeat for his Jan Suraaj Party even before going to the battlefield", while BJP said "Kishor realised he would not win elections" and the JD(U) stated that his decision was a "humiliation for his party workers".

RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwary said Kishor must realise that politics is not as easy as providing consultancy to political parties. "Kishor's tyre has been flattened," he quipped.

Bihar BJP spokesperson Niraj Kumar echoed this: "Kishor's bubble burst even before the elections. By announcing that he won't contest, he has admitted defeat for himself and his party. They will face a humiliating defeat in the polls."

JD(U) spokesperson Neeraj Kumar said, "Earlier, he claimed to have undertaken padayatras to understand the people's issues. What happened to that? His decision is sheer embarrassment for his workers."

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said, "Prashant Kishor is a very smart businessman and he has also had a lot of experience in running election campaigns.... If he loses this election, then his business enterprise will have no takers in the future."

Union minister Giriraj Singh said, "His party is nothing but a 'vote katwa' (a party that cuts the votes of others). Jan Suraaj is the 'B' team of the RJD." —*PTI*

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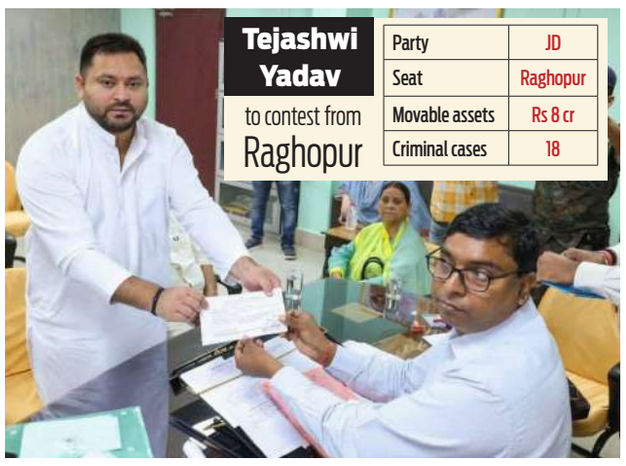


Don-turned politician Anant Singh

Party JD(U)
Seat Mokama
CRIMINAL CASE
Criminal cases : 28
His assets Rs 37.88 cr
Wife's assets Rs 62.72 cr

Several people were spreading rumours that I will contest two seats. The voters of Raghopur have reposed their trust in me twice, and I am going to contest only this one seat

-Tejashwi Yadav, RJD leader

BJP names candidates for Assembly bypolls

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

The BJP on Wednesday announced its candidates for the upcoming bypolls in different states, fielding Aga Syed Mohsin and Devyani Rana from Budgam and Nagrota seats respectively in Jammu and Kashmir.

The party has named Babulal Soren for from Ghatshila seat reserved for Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand.

In Odisha, Jay Dholakia will join the fray from Nuapada and Lankala Deepak Reddy will contest from Jubilee Hills in Telangana, according to the candidates' list released by the BJP. The voting for assembly bypolls in eight constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Punjab, Telangana and Rajasthan will be held on 11 November. —*PTI*

Haryana IPS officer cremated after 8 days

CHANDIGARH, 15 OCT

The cremation of Haryana IPS officer Y Puran Kumar, who allegedly committed suicide took place here on Wednesday.

Kumar's autopsy was conducted at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) after his family gave consent.

Kumar's family, including his wife and IAS officer Amneet P Kumar arrived at the PGIMER to identify the body and complete other formalities. The mortal remains were taken to Amneet official residence here.

The autopsy report will be submitted to the investigating officer of the special investigation team probing the suicide.

In Kumar in his final note, had accused eight senior IPS officers of blatant caste-based discrimination, targeted mental harassment and atrocities.

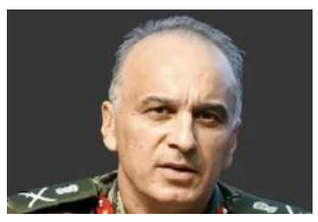
Meanwhile, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini visited the family of assistant sub-inspector Sandeep Kumar, who died by suicide, and assured them of action. —*PTI*

India moulding history using Bollywood-style scripts: Pak

ISLAMABAD, 15 OCT

The Pakistan Army on Wednesday accused India of attempting to "mould history" with "outlandish, Bollywood-style scripts," following Indian Army DGMO Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai's claim that Pakistan lost over 100 soldiers during Operation Sindoor along the Line of Control.

Pakistan said it was "saddened" that the leadership of a nuclear-armed nation was issuing "irresponsible statements,"



warning that such remarks could trigger "jingoism" and threaten regional peace.

The army asserted that Pakistan's forces were "fully capable" of defending every inch of its territory and would respond "swiftly and resolutely" to any aggression. Lt Gen Ghai, citing Pakistan's list of posthumous awards released on 14 August, said the losses included at least 12 aircraft.

Operation Sindoor was launched by India on 7 May after the Pahalgam terror attack, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan-controlled areas, with hostilities ending on 10 May after intense cross-border clashes. —*PTI*

Revanth alleges ACB trap in 2015 cash-for-vote scam

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy told the Supreme Court on Wednesday that the Anti-Corruption Bureau's 2015 "cash-for-vote" trap was "completely illegal" as it was conducted before registering any FIR.

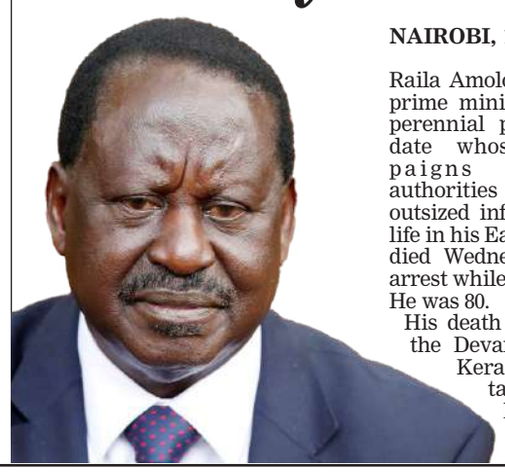
On 31 May, 2015, Reddy, then a Telugu Desam Party leader, was apprehended by the ACB for allegedly offering Rs 50 lakh to nominated MLA Elvis Stephenson to secure support for TDP candidate Vem Narendar Reddy in the legislative council elections.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Reddy, argued before Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi that the trap and subsequent investigation were unlawful, as no probe could begin without an FIR or even a general diary entry.

He further contended that Reddy's prosecution under Section 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act was unsustainable since, at that time, the law covered only bribe takers, not givers. Rohatgi added that voting in a council election was not an "official act". The hearing will resume on Thursday. —*PTI*

'TOWERING STATESMAN'

Ex-Kenyan PM Odinga dies of cardiac arrest in Kochi



NAIROBI, 15 OCT

Raila Amolo Odinga, a former prime minister of Kenya and perennial presidential candidate whose populist campaigns rattled authorities and gave him an outsized influence on political life in his East African country, died Wednesday of a cardiac arrest while travelling in India. He was 80.

His death was confirmed by the Devamatha Hospital in Kerala, where he was taken after he collapsed during a morning walk.

Expressing his grief, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Odinga as "a towering statesman."

The former prime minister, who as opposition leader had waged five unsuccessful presidential campaigns between 1997 and 2022.

Odinga's political activism would see him spend years in jail or in exile. He was first imprisoned in 1982 after a coup attempt against then-President Daniel arap Moi, whose government jailed, tortured and murdered opponents.

Odinga had recently signed a political pact with Ruto that saw his opposition party involved in government policymaking and its members appointed to the cabinet.

But his ambition was to become Kenya's president, and he ran five times over three decades. The closest he came to taking the presidency was in 2007, when he narrowly lost to incumbent Mwai Kibaki in a disputed election marred by ethnic violence.

Although he never succeeded, for many he was a revered figure and statesman whose activism helped steer Kenya away from single-party rule and into vibrant multiparty democracy.

Odinga was born on 7 Januar, 1945, in Kisumu, a city on the shores of Lake Victoria near the border with Uganda.

The son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenya's first vice president, he attended local schools until he left Kenya to study engineering in East Germany.

Upon returning to Kenya in the 1970s, he taught at the University of Nairobi and started a range of busiesses.

Odinga first rose to prominence as a political activist fighting against the one-party rule of President Daniel arap Moi in the 1980s. —*PTI*

Zubeen's death accused sent to judicial custody

GUWAHATI, 15 OCT

Five individuals arrested over the death of Assamese singer Zubeen Garg in Singapore have been remanded to judicial custody in the Baksa jail on Wednesday, even as the public pelted stones at the accused on their arrival there. Those detained include North East India Festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, Zubeen's manager Siddhartha Sharma, his cousin and DSP Sandipan Garg, and two personal security officers, Nandeswar Bora and Prabin Baishya. For safety reasons, all five were moved to Baksa Jail in Mussalpur. Three more Assamese nationals who were with the singer in Singapore have appeared before the special investigating team. Singapore authorities are cooperating with Assam police under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. *—PTI*

J&K cops raid to dismantle terror network in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, 15 OCT

Police in Srinagar district, Jammu and Kashmir, conducted coordinated raids on Wednesday as part of efforts to dismantle the region's terror ecosystem. Searches were carried out at the residences of terrorist associates and over ground workers (OGWs) linked to banned organisations, under cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The operations, supervised by senior J&K Police officers, followed due legal process in the presence of executive magistrates and independent witnesses. Authorities said the raids aimed to seize incriminating materials, including documents and digital devices, and form part of wider intelligence-gathering efforts to pre-empt and disrupt any terrorist or conspiratorial activities. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

2,500-kg of adulterated mawa seized in UP

MEERUT, 15 OCT

Uttar Pradesh's Food Safety and Drug Administration (FSDA) has seized around 2,500 kg of adulterated mawa (condensed milk) and other dairy items from Khoya Mandi during a pre-Diwali crackdown on food adulteration. The operation, led by Chief Food Safety Officer Deepak Kumar, began early on Tuesday when officials intercepted a truck carrying the products. On-site tests showed the mawa had a foul smell and bitter taste, later confirmed adulterated by a laboratory. Deemed unfit for consumption, it was destroyed at the Lohia Nagar dumping ground. The FSDA also collected samples of paneer, chhena and sweets for testing. The drive aimed to ensure only safe food products are available during the festivies. *—PTI*

Rakhi Sawant settles legal dispute with husband

MUMBAI, 15 OCT

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday quashed complaints lodged by actor Rakhi Sawant and her former husband Adil Durrani against each other, noting that the duo had resolved their disputes. The First Information Reports came to be filed due to matrimonial disputes, the court noted. Sawant and Durrani were present in the court. They had no objection to the FIRs being quashed. While Sawant had accused Durrani of criminal intimidation, harassment and unnatural sex, he had alleged that Sawant defamed him by circulating obscene videos of him. The couple had married as per Islamic rites in year 2022. The FIRs were filed in February 2023 as they had announced their separation. *—PTI*

Experts fear pollution spike as SC lifts cracker ban

Experts press for rules, awareness while bursting crackers

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

As the Supreme Court gave a nod to green crackers during Deepavali, environmental experts have expressed concern saying that without proper enforcement and public awareness, the move could worsen Delhi's already toxic air.

The apex court on Wednesday permitted the sale and bursting of green firecrackers in Delhi-NCR at a specific duration during Deepavali with certain conditions.

Environmental activist Amit Gupta called the court's decision "practical" as it respects people's right to celebrate Deepavali, but criticised the broader failure to treat air pollution as a year-round issue. Gupta pointed out serious administrative gaps in the agencies responsible for tackling pollution.

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) is currently operating with a 35 per cent staff shortage, while state bodies like the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) also suffer from similar constraints, he said.

Dipankar Saha, former additional director and head of Air Laboratories at the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), called the ruling "rational", and said certified green crackers are a better alternative to conventional ones, which often contain toxic substances. He stressed on mass awareness and enforcement of rules. Most people burst crackers within a short time window, causing a dangerous spike in toxic air.

Taking a more critical stance, Sunil Dahiya, founder of Envirocatalysts, said the top court's decision might lead to unintended consequences.

He explained that while green crackers may emit 30 per cent less pollution, this benefit is likely to be wiped out by the massive volume of crackers used during Deepavali.

"The overall result is expected to be a net increase in emissions." he added. *—PTI*

The apex court permitted the bursting of green firecrackers in Delhi-NCR at a specific duration during Deepavali with certain conditions **PHOTO: AI**

> **This decision honours the sentiments and festive spirit of the people on Diwali, while also reflecting a balanced approach towards environmental protection**
>
> -Rekha Gupta, Delhi Chief Minister

20 CHARRED TO DEATH

Jaisalmer bus fire: Jammed door trapped passengers

JAISALMER/ JODHPUR, 15 OCT

A jammed door on an AC sleeper bus that caught fire near Jaisalmer on 14 October caused high casualties. Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, calling the incident "deeply tragic," reviewed rescue efforts and directed a green corridor to transfer the injured from Jaisalmer to Jodhpur.

20 passengers were burnt alive, and 15 critically injured after the private bus, en route to Jodhpur, caught fire. Locked doors trapped passengers; some escaped by breaking windows, and water from a passing tanker helped control the blaze.

Jaisalmer SP Abhishek Shivhare said 19 charred bodies were recovered, and 16 critically injured were sent to Jodhpur hospitals, one dying en route. Forensics teams are inspecting the site; initial signs point to a short circuit, though firecrackers are also being investigated.

Eyewitnesses reported a loud blast from the bus rear, likely the AC compressor, with diesel, AC gas, and fibre interiors fueling the blaze. The bus lacked emergency exits, window hammers, and had a narrow aisle that trapped passengers. *—PTI*

The sleeper bus bursting into flames after it caught fire near Jaisalmar on Tuesday **PHOTO: ANI**

SC allows Wangchuk's wife to amend plea

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

The Supreme Court on Wednesday adjourned to 29 October the hearing on a plea filed by climate activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali J Angmo challenging the climate activist's detention after noting that she wants to amend her petition.

The court said that an affidavit filed by the jailor of Jodhpur jail said that Wangchuk's elder brother and lawyer met the detenue.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Angmo, said they will file an application to amend the petition and challenge the grounds of detention.

Sibal requested that Wangchuk be permitted to exchange some notes with his wife.

The top court on had issues notices to the Centre and the Union Territory of Ladakh, though it had refused to pass any order on her plea for providing her the grounds of detention.

Wangchuk was detained under the stringent National Security Act (NSA) after violent protests demanding statehood and Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh left four people dead and 90 injured in the Union territory.

The government had accused him of inciting the violence. The NSA empowers the Centre and states to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India". *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Durgapur rape survivor's friend held

KOLKATA, 15 OCT

Police have arrested a friend of a medical student raped near a private college in Durgapur, taking total arrests to six. The survivor, a second-year MBBS student from Odisha, and her friend had left IQ City Medical College in Shivapur when several men forcibly took her to a forested area and raped her.

Her father had named the friend in his complaint, saying he "misled her and took her to a vacant place under false pretexts."

Asansol-Durgapur Commissioner of Police Sunil Kumar Choudhary said five others had already been arrested, confirmed to be at the crime scene, and the survivor's snatched mobile phone recovered.

Police found only one person sexually assaulted the survivor.

She also altered her statement during investigation, and the involvement of the other four is being probed.

The commissioner said the friend's "role was not beyond doubt" but he was taken to the crime scene, interrogated, and subsequently arrested.

Authorities have assured of the strict action and fast-track investigation in the case. *—Agencies*

Activists, citizens protest the rape of the MBBS student in Durgapur and demand for justice for the victim **PHOTO: ANI/SCREENGRAB**

WB engineering student 'raped' by classmate

KOLKATA, 15 OCT

A second-year student of a private engineering college in Kolkata has alleged she was raped by a classmate, police said.

The accused, who had gone into hiding, was arrested in Anandapur in the city's southern part.

The woman, who came to West Bengal for her studies, filed a complaint at Anandapur Police Station, claiming she was drugged and sexually assaulted. "She stated that she was staying in a rented flat in Anandapur, where the accused laced her drink with drugs. She became unconscious and was later raped," a senior officer said.

When produced before a city court, the accused was remanded in police custody until 22 October.

Police have launched a detailed investigation and said further information would be released soon.

The case comes shortly after a medical college student in Durgapur was allegedly gang-raped outside her campus. *—PTI*

Delhi rape victim told to bathe, change clothes

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

An 18-year-old South Asian University (SAU) student has accused hostel officials of negligence after she was allegedly gang-raped by four unidentified men on campus Sunday evening.

Her FIR statement said, instead of alerting authorities or providing support, staff dismissed her account, discouraged contact with family, and advised her to 'take bath and change clothes.'

The first-year BTech student alleged that she was coerced into leaving her hostel via threatening emails and obscene messages before being assaulted near the university convocation centre.

She claimed officials physically prevented her from video calling her mother to show injuries. Friends eventually contacted police Monday afternoon; a team recorded her statement and conducted a medical examination at Madan Mohan Malviya Hospital. DCP (South) Ankit Chauhan confirmed a case under multiple sections of BNS. *— PTI*

'Mahabharat,' 'Chandrakanta' star Pankaj Dheer no more

MUMBAI, 15 OCT

Veteran television actor Pankaj Dheer, famed for his roles as Karna in BR Chopra's 'Mahabharat' and King Shivdutt in 'Chandrakanta,' died at 68 following a battle with cancer.

"He passed away due to cancer this morning. He had been in and out of hospital in the past months," producer and friend Ashoke Pandit told PTI. The cremation will be held later on Wednesday.

Born in Punjab, Dheer began his acting career in the 1980s with minor film roles. His breakthrough came in 1988 as Karna in Mahabharat, after which he appeared in films including Sadak, Sanam Bewafa, Soldier, Baadshah, Andaz, and Zameen. From 1994–96, he played Shivdutt in Chandrakanta and later appeared in TV soaps like Teen Bahuraaniyaan and Sasural Simar Ka.

He is survived by wife Anita and son Nikitin Dheer. *— PTI*

9 NOVEMBER 1956 - 15 OCTOBER 2025

Apex court praises ED for restoring Rs 175 crore assets to homebuyers

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has returned flats, commercial units, and plots worth Rs 175 crore to over 200 homebuyers who had awaited possession for more than 12 years.

The unsold inventory, 354 flats, 17 commercial units, and two plots, belongs to Udaipur's Royal Rajvilas (RRV) project. The case stems from a money laundering probe against Bharat Bomb and others, accused of cheating Syndicate Bank (now Canara Bank) of Rs 1,267.79 crore between 2011-2016.

In 2019, the ED had attached properties worth Rs 535 crore, including Rs 83.51 crore in unsold/unregistered inventory of Udaipur Entertainment World Pvt Ltd (UEWPL). Challenges led the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to approve UEWPL's resolution plan and vacate the ED's attachment. The Rajasthan High Court noted the ED had "suffered" by not being impleaded in NCLT proceedings. The apex court directed both parties to reach a consensus to safeguard bona fide homebuyers, whose investments were stalled due to legal disputes. *—PTI*

Law ensuring drugs quality soon

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

The Centre is drafting the Drugs, Medical Devices and Cosmetics Act 2025 to strengthen legal oversight of drug quality, medical devices, and cosmetics. The move follows repeated global concerns, including from the WHO, over quality lapses by Indian manufacturers.

The draft, presented by Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) Dr Rajeev Raghuvanshi at a Union Health Ministry meeting chaired by Health Minister J P Nadda, proposes statutory powers for the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) to act immediately against fake or substandard products. It also aims to digitise licensing, improve coordination with state regulators, and upgrade lab testing capacities.

The legislation, to replace the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940, comes after deaths of children in Madhya Pradesh linked to contaminated cough syrup. CDSCO data show 3.2 per cent of tested drugs in 2023-24 were substandard, prompting action against over 40 units in two years. *—PTI*

OVER OBJECTIONABLE POSTS

Delhi HC protects Hrithik, Sanu's personality rights

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

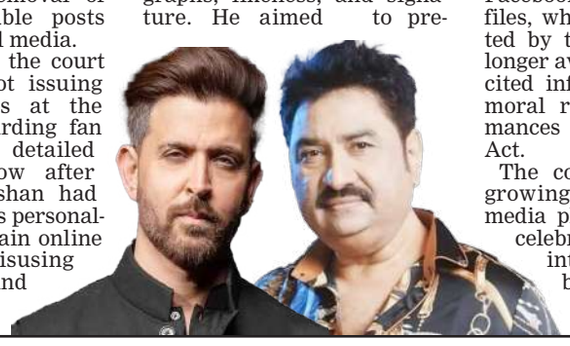
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday upheld the personality and publicity rights of Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan and singer Kumar Sanu, directing removal of certain objectionable posts and videos on social media.

In Roshan's case, the court clarified it was not issuing ex-parte directions at the interim stage regarding fan pages and said a detailed order would follow after hearing them. Roshan had sought to protect his personality rights and restrain online platforms from misusing his name, images, and AI-generated inappropriate content.

Sanu's plea sought protection of his personality and publicity rights, including his name, voice, vocal style, arrangements, mannerisms, images, caricatures, photographs, likeness, and signature. He aimed to prevent unauthorized or commercial use likely to confuse, deceive, or dilute his public image.

The court noted that counsel for one defendant said Sanu's grievance involved four Facebook and Instagram profiles, while 334 URLs submitted by the plaintiff were no longer available. The suit also cited infringement of Sanu's moral rights in his performances under the Copyright Act.

The court highlighted the growing misuse of social media platforms in violating celebrities' rights. Detailed interim injunctions in both cases will be issued later. *—PTI*



Kerala Hijab row: School reopens but pupil absent

KOCKI, 15 OCT

St Rita's Public School in Palluruthy reopened on Wednesday after a two-day closure triggered by a dispute over a student's right to wear a hijab. The class eight student, whose parents support her choice to wear the religious headscarf, was absent due to health reasons, school sources said.

The management had declared holidays on Monday and Tuesday amid tensions. Police were deployed on campus Wednesday morning, and media were barred. State General Education Minister V Sivankutty reaffirmed the student's right, saying, "The student can attend the classes wearing a hijab until she and her parents decide otherwise," and stressed that constitutional and educational laws protect students' rights. However, Joshy, PTA president, said no government order had been received.

The controversy surfaced after a principal's letter citing mental stress among students and staff went viral. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

- Education Minister reaffirmed the student's right, saying, "The student can attend the classes wearing a hijab until she and her parents decide otherwise."

BLACK HOLE

A hundred metre stretch of the Bhopal Bypass road in Madhya Pradesh collapsed on Monday, leaving behind a 30 foot crater. The state government blamed the collapse on farmers digging near the road's wall
PHOTO: X

Cough syrup deaths expose India's policy gaps

The deaths of more than 20 children in Madhya Pradesh have left Indians shaken and angry, as the country that sees itself as a pharma powerhouse faces painful issues regarding its drug safety protocols.

All of the victims were aged under five. Most of them died over the past month after they were prescribed contaminated cough syrup, containing fatal levels of diethylene glycol (DEG) — an industrial solvent and antifreeze chemical that can trigger acute kidney failure.

It was the same deadly compound linked to past tragedies connected to Indian-made cough syrup, including the deaths of 18 children in Uzbekistan in 2023, around 70 children in The Gambia in 2022 and 12 in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 and 2020.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), state officials and other regulatory bodies responded to the latest tragedy by banning the syrup's sale across multiple states, issuing paediatric cough syrup advisories, and launching an investigation into the manufacturing process.

"We have initiated risk-based inspections at 19 drug manufacturing units across six states to identify quality lapses," CDSCO official DR Gahane said in a statement.

The owner of Sresan Pharmaceuticals, the company behind the tainted cough syrup in Madhya Pradesh, has since been arrested and his company shut down.

However, experts warn India's pharmaceutical industry continues to operate under a patchwork of uneven state regulation, corruption-riddled testing and poor inter-state coordination.

PHOTO: AI

DIFFEREING STANDARDS

India is the world's largest vaccine supplier, producing well over half of global demand. It is also leading the world in the production of generic medications, supplying at least 20 per cent of the market, though some estimates put it as high as 40 per cent. At the same time, however, each state oversees its own pharma manufacturing, allowing some pharma companies to exploit the gaps and avoid accountability.

Soumya Swaminathan, a former chief scientist at the World Health Organisation (WHO), warned that India's drug regulatory framework urgently needs comprehensive reform.

"The quality of oversight varies significantly from state to state, and corruption remains a serious concern," she said. "Moreover, weak coordination among state regulators continues to undermine effective safety enforcement."

'A PATRONAGE SCHEME'

Dinesh Thakur, a prominent whistleblower who exposed widespread fraud at Ranbaxy, one of India's largest pharmaceutical companies, shares similar concerns.

"Yes, there is more than adequate evidence that public procurement at the state level is littered with corruption. How else can one explain why Madhya Pradesh purchased drugs from companies blacklisted by the government?" Thakur said.

The public health activist points to a recent report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, which showed that the Madhya Pradesh Public Health Services Corporation Limited continued to purchase and distribute medicines banned for human use by the government, endangering public health.

"State level public procurement is basically a patronage scheme for manufacturers who fund political campaigns," Thakur added.

MANY DRUGS ARE SUBSTANDARD

Medical journals and studies estimate that between 20 per cent and 25 per cent of the medicines available in the market are below the required standards. Additionally, counterfeit drugs have spawned a sprawling shadow industry in India, posing acute risks to public health and destabilizing the country's fast-growing pharma sector.

Nakul Pasricha, managing director and CEO of PharmaSecure, said the country needs regular and sustained testing and inspections, and stricter action against violators.

"Are the current penalties a sufficient deterrent? That should be examined. We need to create more awareness among patients and consumers to be wary. I believe we need to leverage technology and solutions to have better traceability and information dissemination," Pasricha told DW.

"Manufacturers are now being asked to incorporate and disclose excipient information on drug labels. Why can't we have complete visibility available by leveraging QR codes already being applied to labels?" said Pasricha, who works with pharmaceutical makers to track and verify their supply chains and ensure the authenticity of their drugs.

Pasricha says his company applies unique codes on medicine packages that consumers can check using their phones to confirm the drug is authentic.

India's pharmaceutical market is worth around $50 billion, according to various industry and government estimates. It is among the top three largest producers of pharmaceuticals by volume.

"India has the expertise to produce world-class medicines, but the scale of the industry may have outgrown its quality controls. Without consistent, independent testing, the system relies on trust rather than verification which helps explain the recent cough syrup-linked deaths," said Rajeev Jayadevan, a medical professional and health communicator.

He said that India's position as a drug manufacturing leader also brings responsibility —*DW News*

SALAR سالار

Israel is still not allowing foreign media into Gaza

The world's media are currently busy recording the tales of released Israeli hostages, freed Palestinian prisoners and their families after a ceasefire came into effect for the war in Gaza. But they are doing so while still being held at a distance from the centre of the story.

Foreign journalists have been banned by Israel from entering the Gaza Strip independently since the start of the war. And senior members of the international media are not optimistic that access to Gaza will change any time soon.

Phil Chetwynd, global news director at Agence France-Presse (AFP), said, "Any situation where independent media are kept out or targeted gives rise to questions about the motivation. We are told it is because of our safety, but we have been covering wars non-stop for the past 100 years. We are ready to assume the risks. Given the extraordinary high death toll of journalists in Gaza, we have to presume it is a deliberate attempt to stop media revealing the full impact of the war and the Israeli military campaign."

He reflected on how AFP would like to plan its coverage.

"Our Palestinian journalists have done an amazing job, but all our Gaza staff journalists were evacuated over a year ago," he added. "They would like to return. The Palestinian freelancers who work for us have also done incredible work, but they are absolutely exhausted after two years of conflict. So we need journalists to be able to enter the Gaza Strip – I do not make a distinction between Palestinian and international. (I) think it is important to have fresh eyes on the situation on the ground. I would also say it is sometimes easier for international journalists to report more freely on the activities of Hamas."

For the past two years, the only access Israel has provided for foreign media to enter Gaza has been under embedded conditions with the Israeli military. In the weeks following the 7 October attacks in 2023, a number of British reporters including from the BBC and Channel 4 News did avail of this restricted coverage. American correspondents and news agencies have also taken up offers.

But this access has been sporadic and has favoured Israeli journalists. In August 2025, an ABC Australia team managed to secure an "embed" trip to the Kerem Shalom aid site in southern Gaza after repeated requests were turned down.

In his report, ABC's Matthew Doran pointed out that embeds are "highly choreographed and controlled". However, Doran explained that he accepted the trip as "an opportunity to gain access to a site Israel is using to prosecute its case it is trying to feed the population of Gaza – an argument the humanitarian community, and world leaders, argue is full of holes".

Doran noted that the small embed trip included an Israeli media outlet, an Israeli writer and "a handful of social media influencers", all eager to post pro-Israeli sentiments. Israel has consistently accused the international media of succumbing to Hamas propaganda.

A number of initiatives have been tried over the past 24 months to enable external reporters access to Gaza. The Foreign Press Association (FPA) in Jerusalem has challenged the restrictions in Israel's supreme court.

On 11 September, the FPA noted that it had been a full year since it submitted its second petition to the court. But despite the urgency, it said "the court has repeatedly agreed to the [Israeli] government's request for delays and postponed one hearing after another".

Petitions have also been sent to the Israeli authorities with the backing of international media organisations and groups such as Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Both of these have coupled their campaigns with calls for an immediate end to the killing of Palestinian journalists in Gaza who have been the world's only eyes on the conflict as witnessed by those under fire.

According to the CPJ's Jodie Ginsberg, writing in the Guardian in August, more than 192 journalists and media workers have been killed in Gaza since the start of the war. This number includes 26 journalists whom the CPJ believes have been targeted deliberately in "the deadliest conflict for journalists that we have ever documented".

As recently as September, the BBC along with AFP, Associated Press and Reuters launched a film calling on the Israeli authorities to allow the international press access to Gaza.

It noted the media's part in informing the world about the D-Day landings, the Vietnam war, the Ethiopian famine, the Tiananmen Square massacre, the Rwandan genocide, the Syrian refugee crisis and the current conflict in Ukraine.

But looking at the current stalemate, a cynic might ponder if the first open access to Gaza will be to the Washington press caravanserai that will surely be allowed in to document the rebuilding of Gaza into a Riviera. —*The Conversation*

People gather to greet freed Palestinian prisoners arriving on buses in the Gaza Strip after their release from Israeli jails under a ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel, outside Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip
PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Despite deal, prominent doctor among 100s in Israel jail

- Throughout the siege, Abu Safiya repeatedly refused military calls to shut down the Al-Awda Hospital, which had been damaged by repeated drone strikes and evacuate

Dr Hossam Abu Safiya had become the face of the struggle, often uploading videos to show the dire situation of Gaza's hospitals, before Israel detained him for being a 'Hamas' agent
PHOTO: AI

Under Gaza's ceasefire deal, Israel freed dozens of doctors, nurses, paramedics and other medical personnel seized during raids on hospitals. But more than 100 remain in Israeli prisons, including Dr Hossam Abu Safiya, a hospital director who became the face of the struggle to keep treating patients under Israeli siege and bombardment.

Despite widespread calls for his release, Abu Safiya was not among the hundreds of Palestinian detainees and prisoners freed Monday in exchange for 20 hostages held by Hamas. Abu Safiya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, has been imprisoned without charge by Israel for nearly 10 months.

Health Workers Watch, which documents detentions from Gaza, said 55 medical workers — including 31 doctors and nurses — were on lists of detainees from Gaza being freed Monday, though it could not immediately be confirmed all were released.

The group said at least 115 medical workers remain in custody, as well as the remains of four who died while in Israeli prisons, where rights groups and witnesses have reported frequent abuse.

Cheering staff from al-Awda Hospital carried on their shoulders their released director, Ahmed Muhanna, who was held by Israel for about 22 months since being seized in a raid on the facility in northern Gaza in late 2023.

"Al-Awda Hospital will be restored, its staff will rebuild it with their own hands... I am proud of what we have done and will do," Muhanna told well-wishers, according to video posted on social media.

Al-Awda Hospital, damaged during multiple offensives in the largely levelled Jabaliya refugee camp, has been shut down since May, when it was forced to evacuate during Israel's latest offensive.

Israel's two-year campaign aiming to destroy Hamas after its 7 Oct, attack decimated Gaza's health system, forcing most of its hospitals to shut down and heavily damaging many, even as staff struggled to treat waves of wounded from bombardment amid supply shortages.

The Israeli military said Abu Safiya was being investigated on suspicion of cooperating with or working for Hamas. In November 2023, Israeli forces seized Dr Mohamed Abu Selmiya, director of Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, declaring him a Hamas officer — but then released him seven months later.

Abu Safiya, a paediatrician, led Kamal Adwan Hospital through an 85-day siege of the facility by Israeli troops during an offensive in the surrounding districts of Jabaliya, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun.

When troops raided the hospital on Dec 27, images showed Abu Safiya in his white lab coat walking out of the building through streets of rubble toward an Israeli armoured vehicle to discuss evacuation of patients. Abu Safiya and dozens of others, including patients and staff, were taken prisoner.

Abu Safiya "stayed in the hospital until the last moment. He didn't leave because all health care services there would collapse if he left. Dr Hossam is a truly great man," said Dr Saeed Salah, medical director of the Patient's Friends Hospital in Gaza City, who has known Abu Safiya for 29 years.

Throughout the siege, Abu Safiya repeatedly refused military calls to shut down the hospital and evacuate. He posted frequent videos on social media showing staff struggling to treat waves of wounded Palestinians.

In October 2024, a drone strike killed one of his sons, Ibrahim, at the hospital entrance.

"I refused to leave the hospital and sacrifice my patients, so the army punished me by killing my son," he said in a video afterward.

The next month, shrapnel from a drone blast wounded Abu Safiya as he sat in his office.

"Even with his wound, he was circulating among the patients... He was sleeping, eating, drinking among the patients," said Dr Rana Soboh.

Abu Safiya became the hospital's director in late 2023 after his predecessor, Dr Ahmed Kahlout, was seized in an Israeli raid. Abu Safiya worked to rebuild the heavily damaged hospital.

THE RAID

On 27 Dec, troops surrounded the compound. Abu Safiya's son Elias, who was in the hospital, said his father went out to talk to the officers, then returned and asked the staff to gather everyone — patients, staff and family members — in the courtyard. Some were evacuated to other hospitals, others were detained.

Zaher Sahloul, President of MedGlobal, said troops wrecked the hospital's radiology department and operating rooms, and destroyed ventilators.

Days after Abu Safiya was detained, his 74-year-old mother died, Elias said.

"She hadn't stopped crying since they detained him," he said.

IMPRISONMENT

Abu Safiya is currently being held at Israel's Ofer Prison in the occupied West Bank. The Israeli rights group Physicians for Human Rights–Israel, which visited him in September, said he had not been brought before a judge or interrogated and had no information about why he was detained.

Abu Safiya said he and other detainees received insufficient food and medical care, the group said, adding that he had lost about 25kg since his detention. It said he reported that guards regularly beat prisoners during searches of their cells.

Islam Mohammed, a freelance journalist, was detained with Abu Safiya.

"The treatment was inhuman from the time of detention, until release," said Mohammed, who was released to Gaza on Monday. "To call it a beating does not describe it." —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

US kills 6 more aboard another Venezuelan ship

WASHINGTON, 15 OCT

The US military conducted a strike on a vessel off the coast of Venezuela accused of drug trafficking, killing six onboard, President Donald Trump announced Tuesday. He described the ship as linked to a 'Designated Terrorist Organisation,' without naming the group or providing evidence. "Intelligence confirmed the vessel was trafficking narcotics and connected to illicit networks," Trump posted on Truth Social. The strike occurred in international waters; no US forces were harmed. This is at least the fifth acknowledged strike this month. The operations have drawn scrutiny over legality and potential escalation with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Trump released an unclassified video of the strike. ***—ANI***

Toxic fumes slow rescue after B'desh blaze kills 16

DHAKA, 15 OCT

Thick toxic fumes continued to pour from a fire-ravaged chemical warehouse in Dhaka on Wednesday, preventing rescuers from entering the site more than 24 hours after the blaze killed at least 16 people, officials said. Fire Service Assistant Director Kazi Nazmuzzaman said teams in protective suits opened the gate but were unable to enter due to dense white smoke inside. The depot, operating without permission, caught fire on Tuesday, which then spread to an adjacent garment factory in Mirpur. All 16 victims were recovered from the garment unit, officials said, adding several were burnt beyond recognition. Firefighters used robots to control the flames as army and BGB personnel joined operations. ***—PTI***

Pak, IMF reach initial agreement on $1.2B loan

ISLAMABAD, 15 OCT

Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday reached a staff-level agreement (SLA) paving the way for Islamabad to access USD 1.2 billion, pending the IMF board's approval. The agreement includes USD 1 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and USD 200 million under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility. The IMF mission led by Iva Petrova concluded talks with Pakistani authorities last week. Petrova said Pakistan's economic programme under the EFF was stabilising the economy, with a current account surplus for the first time in 14 years, lower inflation, and improved market confidence. She said recent floods had impacted the agricultural sector, bringing down FY26 GDP projections to 3.25–3.5 per cent. ***—PTI***

US seizes $14B in Bitcoin linked to scam

WASHINGTON, 15 OCT

United States authorities have seized over $14 billion in Bitcoin and charged Chen Zhi, a UK-Cambodian national and founder of the Prince Group, with masterminding a vast cryptocurrency scam involving forced labour camps. Chen faces wire-fraud and money laundering charges in New York and remains at large. US and UK sanctions froze his assets, including 19 London properties, one worth nearly £100 million. Prosecutors allege Chen ran compounds across Cambodia, operating call centres and 'phone farms' to defraud thousands globally, trafficking workers in the process. Luxury purchases included private jets, watches, and art. Conviction carries up to 40 years. UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper called the operation decisive action against this transnational threat. ***—Salar News***

A viral video purportedly shows masked Hamas gunmen executing people whom the organisation later called Israeli agents **PHOTO: X**

HAMAS 'PUBLICLY EXECUTES' 8 GAZANS

Trump says if they don't disarm, we will disarm them

JERUSALEM, 15 OCT

Hamas allegedly publicly executed at least eight Palestinians in Gaza, in a video that was circulated Tuesday night.

The videos show several masked men with guns, who are believed to be Hamas, line up eight people whose arms are tied behind their backs and shoot them in front of a crowd on a street, to shouts of Allahu Akbar.

Hamas, in a statement, said the victims were "criminals and collaborators with Israel".

This comes as Hamas has clashed with armed groups and gangs in Gaza Strip, many of which are armed or backed by Israel, as it seeks to retain power as the ceasefire deal with Israel has taken effect. Under the agreement, pushed for by US President Donald Trump, Hamas is expected to disarm and hand over governance of the Gaza Strip to an international transitional body.

However, there were no clear steps on how Hamas

Trump on Tuesday stated that if Hamas didn't disarm the US would disarm them.

"They (Hamas) know I'm not playing games," he said. "They're going to disarm, because they said they were going to disarm... And if they don't disarm, we will disarm them."

ONE OF THE BODIES NOT A HOSTAGE

The Israeli military said that one of the bodies handed over by Hamas on Tuesday is not that of one of the hostages.

Four bodies were handed over by Hamas on Tuesday, following the first four on Monday — when the last 20 living hostages were released. In all, Israel was awaiting the return of the bodies of 28 deceased hostages.

The military said that the forensic examination revealed that the body did not match any of the hostages.

—Salar News with Agencies

Over 50 killed in clashes between Pak-Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD/KABUL 15 OCT

Pakistan army said on Wednesday that it repulsed multiple attacks by the Afghan Taliban while killing over 40 attackers in separate incidents of border clashes between the two countries, while Kabul said that Islamabad launched cross-border strikes, killing at least 12 civilians and injuring 100s.

The Afghan Taliban attacked four locations, which were effectively repulsed by Pakistani Forces, Islamabad's army said.

The army said there were "reports of further build up in staging points of Fitna Al Khwarij (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) and Afghan Taliban."

Pakistan said the attack divided villages in the area, with the Taliban showing no regard for the civilian population, it said.

"The Afghan Taliban also destroyed Pak-Afghan Friendship Gate on their side that clearly displays the mindset with regard to mutual trade and easement rights of the divided tribes," the army said.

However, the Taliban said that its forces were retaliating against the Pakistani strikes in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province, and seized multiple Pakistani military posts, weapons and tanks, killing "multiple Pakistani aggressor soldiers".

Pakistan, however, claimed to have destroyed several Afghan posts and tanks, rubbishing Taliban's claim that Islamabad initiated the attacks.

Pakistan also demolished an Afghan refugee camp in Karachi. *—Agencies*

A man injured in the clashes between Pakistan and Afghan forces being brought to hospital in Chaman, Pakistan on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

NATO to buy more US arms for Ukraine

BRUSSELS, 15 OCT

- NATO's two newest members, Finland and Sweden have joined the PURL, which buys American weapons for Ukraine after a report showed that foreign aid dropped by 43% to Kyiv

NATO's two newest members, Finland and Sweden, said Wednesday that they would buy more weapons from the US to give to Ukraine, after data showed that foreign military aid to Kyiv dropped by 43 per cent in July and August compared with the first half of the year.

Over the summer, NATO started to coordinate regular deliveries of large weapons packages to Ukraine, with the aim of sending at least one load a month of targeted and predictable military support, each worth around USD 500 million. But the spare weapons have dried up.

Under the financial arrangement — known as the Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List, or PURL — European allies and Canada are buying American weapons to help Kyiv keep Russian forces at bay. About USD 2 billion worth has already been allocated.

Finland and Sweden have joined the PURL as bigger NATO and EU members such as France and Italy are mired in debt, while the US has asked the member-nations to pull their own weight, while mulling giving long-range Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the UN said its aid delivery truck was struck by Russian missiles in Ukraine. *—Agencies*

Trump calls BRICS an attack on dollar

NEW YORK, 15 OCT

US President Donald Trump has called the BRICS grouping an "attack" on the US dollar, claiming that he threatened nations seeking to join the bloc with tariffs following which "everybody dropped out".

BRICS comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates. Trump has often threatened to impose additional tariffs on the bloc for what he calls its "anti-American" policies.

The BRICS nations have voiced serious concerns about the rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures which distort trade.

Speaking at a bilateral meeting with Argentine President Javier Milei on Tuesday, Trump said he was "very strong" on the dollar, adding that "anybody who wants to deal in dollars" will have an "advantage" over those who do not.

"...I told anybody who wants to be in BRICS, that's fine, but we're going to put tariffs on your nation. Everybody dropped out. They're all dropping out of BRICS," he claimed. "BRICS was an attack on the dollar."

Trump said he told potential members that if they "want to play that game, I'm going to put tariffs on all of your product coming into the US." *—PTI*

President Donald Trump awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Charlie Kirk on his 32nd birth anniversary. He gave the award to Charlie's wife Erika on Wednesday at the White House. The government suspended 6 visas for their social media posts against Charlie **PHOTO:**

'MAY END BIZ WITH CHINA AS THEY DON'T BUY SOYBEANS'

Trump said China's decision to buy soybeans from the US was an "Economically Hostile Act" on Truth Social. "I believe that China purposefully not buying our Soybeans, and causing difficulty for our Soybean Farmers, is an Economically Hostile Act. We are considering terminating business with China having to do with Cooking Oil, and other elements of Trade, as retribution," he posted on Truth Social.

If Milei loses, will pull aid to Argentina: Trump

WASHINGTON, 15 OCT

President Donald Trump on Tuesday threatened to pull assistance for Argentina if President Javier Milei loses the upcoming midterm election for its legislative body later this month.

Trump said that the US would not "waste our time" with largesse toward Buenos Aires if Milei does not prevail against an opponent on "extremely far-Left". Milei is also up for reelection in 2027.

"If he loses, we are not going to be generous with Argentina," Trump said from the Cabinet Room as he prepared to eat lunch with Milei.

Trump stressed that the USD 20 billion assistance to Argentina, which administration officials strenuously deny is a bailout, was about helping "our neighbours". The aid, he added, is "just helping a great philosophy take over a great country".

As he opened his lunch with Milei, Trump noted that the Argentine President, who is an economist by trade, is "MAGA all the way".

"Make America Great Again", but this time, it added "Make Argentina Great Again". *—PTI*

SHRIMP, SPICE EXPORTS RECALLED

Indonesia finds radioactive elements at clove farm

JAKARTA, 15 OCT

Indonesia detected traces of radioactive cesium 137 at a clove plantation as it searches for the source of radioactive contamination that forced recalls of shrimp and spices exported to the US, a task force investigating the issue said Wednesday.

US Food and Drug Administration officials blocked the import of all spices processed by PT Natural Java Spice of Indonesia in September after federal inspectors detected cesium 137 in a shipment of cloves sent to California.

That was the second food product from Indonesia to be recalled from sale due to radioactive contamination this year, following a recall of shrimp from another Indonesian company in August.

PHOTO: X

The task force found cesium 137 at a clove plantation in Lampung province. It also inspected clove processing facilities in Surabaya city in East Java province and another plantation in Central Java province, working with Indonesia's Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency.

"We can confirm that contamination has been found on plantations in Lampung. The contamination was found in limited quantities and has not spread," said Bara Hasibuan, the task force's spokesperson.

The nuclear regulatory agency recommended a temporary halt to sales of contaminated clove products.

The task force traced the earlier contamination of shrimp to a steel factory in the Cikande industrial estate, which sends millions of pounds of shrimp to the US each year.

Experts agreed that health risks are low since very low levels of radioactivity were found. *—PTI*

Madagascar's coup leader says he will be President

ANTANANARIVO, 15 OCT

Madagascar's military coup leader said Wednesday that he is "taking the position of President".

Col. Michael Randrianirina, who led a rebellion by soldiers that ousted president Andry Rajoelina, said he expects to be sworn in as the Indian Ocean country's new leader in the next few days.

Randrianirina announced Tuesday that the armed forces were taking power in Madagascar, capping weeks of Gen Z protests against Rajoelina and his government by mainly youth groups. He said he is taking the role as head of state after the country's High Constitutional Court invited him to do so in the absence of Rajoelina, who fled Madagascar following the uprising.

"There must be an oath-taking" to make his position official, Randrianirina said.*—PTI*

Indian-American expert held over defence data

WASHINGTON, 15 OCT

Ashley J Tellis, a prominent Indian-American strategic affairs expert, has been arrested for unlawfully retaining national defence information.

A senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Tellis specialises in international security, defence, and Asian strategic issues.

"Tellis, 64, of Vienna, Virginia, was arrested over the weekend and charged by criminal complaint with the unlawful retention of national defence information," the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia said Tuesday.

"The charges as alleged in this case represent a grave risk to the safety and security of our citizens," US Attorney Lindsey Halligan said, adding that her office remains fully focused on protecting the American people from all threats, foreign and domestic.

PHOTO: X

If convicted, Tellis faces up to 10 years in prison, a fine of USD 250,000, a USD 100 special assessment, and forfeiture. A federal judge will determine the sentence following US Sentencing Guidelines.

Born in Mumbai and educated at the University of Chicago, Tellis was influential in shaping the India-US civil nuclear agreement under the George W. Bush administration, a landmark that transformed bilateral ties in the mid-2000s. *—PTI*

Govt reverses tax-free missile policy amid probe against Adani

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

The government has reversed its recent policy exempting all missile parts from import duties, following an ongoing investigation into alleged tax evasion by Adani Defence, Reuters reported.

In September, a blanket customs duty exemption was announced for all missile parts, regardless of range. However, a 9 October corrigendum removed the word "missiles" from the policy without explanation, effectively reinstating the previous rule — only parts used in long-range missiles remain exempt, while those for short-range systems are now taxable.

The policy change comes amid a Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) investigation into Adani Defence Systems and Technologies for allegedly evading Rs 77 crore in taxes. Reuters reported that since March, the DRI has been probing whether the company misclassified missile components imported for short-range surface-to-air missile systems as long-range parts to wrongfully claim tax exemptions.

The components in question were subject to a 10 per cent import duty and 18% local tax.

In a statement to Reuters, the Adani Group said the DRI had "sought clarifications" which were "provided with supporting documents." The spokesperson added, "The issue stands closed from our end," without disclosing if any payments were made.

Adani Defence, a smaller unit of the conglomerate, manufactures missiles, drones, and arms. Since January 2024, it has imported $70 million in defence components from countries including Canada, Israel, and Russia. —*Agencies*

India spent €2.5B on Russian oil buy in Sept

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

India, the world's third-largest oil consumer, spent 2.5 billion euro on buying crude oil from Russia in September, 14 per cent less than the previous month, a European think tank said. India remained the second-largest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in September behind China, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). Traditionally reliant on Middle Eastern oil, India significantly increased its imports from Russia following the February 2022 Ukraine invasion. Western sanctions and reduced European demand made Russian oil available at steep discounts. As a result, India's Russian crude imports surged from under 1 per cent to nearly 40 per cent of its total crude oil imports in a short span. India's imports of Russian crude at about 1.6 million barrels per day were 9 per cent lower month-on-month to their lowest volumes since February, despite their total imports recording a marginal increase.—***PTI***

Rupee rebounds 75P from record low at 88.06/USD

MUMBAI, 15 OCT

The rupee surged 75 paise to close at 88.06 against the US dollar on Wednesday, marking its biggest intraday gain in nearly four months. The rebound followed likely RBI intervention, strong domestic markets, and a weaker dollar.Opening at 88.74, the rupee hit a session high of 87.93 before settling at 88.06. On Tuesday, it had closed at an all-time low of 88.81.Analysts cited optimism over India-US trade talks, easing crude prices, and fresh foreign inflows as key support factors. The dollar index fell 0.22% to 98.82, while Brent crude slipped 0.19% to USD 62.27/barrel.Sensex rose 575 points to 82,605.43, and Nifty gained 178 points to 25,323.55. India's exports rose 6.74 per cent in September; imports jumped 16.6%, with a trade deficit of USD 32.1 billion. —***PTI***

Tata Comms Q2 profit falls 19%, revenue rises 6.5%

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Tata Communications, the Tata Group's telecom services arm, reported a 19 per cent year-on-year decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 183.21 crore for Q2 FY26, compared to Rs 227.27 crore last year. Sequentially, profit dipped 3.6 per cent from Rs 190.14 crore in Q1. Despite the profit drop, revenue from operations rose 6.5 per cent Y-o-Y to Rs 6,099.75 crore, up from Rs 5,727.85 crore in Q2 FY25. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, revenue grew 2.3 per cent from Rs 5,959.85 crore, driven by over 7 per cent growth in data services. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation stood at Rs 1,174 crore, up 3.9 per cent Y-o-Y.—***PTI***

Tech Mahindra shares decline 2% post Q2 results

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Shares of IT services company Tech Mahindra dipped by nearly 2 per cent on Wednesday after the firm reported a 4.44 per cent decline in its September quarter net profit to Rs 1,194.5 crore. The stock fell by 1.85 per cent to Rs 1,440.90 on the BSE. At the NSE, it dipped 1.88 per cent to Rs 1,440.40. The post-tax profit is lower than the Rs 1,250 crore it had posted in the year-ago period and higher than the Rs 1,141 crore it reported in the June quarter. Its revenue grew to Rs 13,995 crore from Rs 13,313 crore a year ago and Rs 13,351 crore in the quarter-ago period. Managing Director Mohit Joshi said it is due to macroeconomic issues —***PTI***

China moves WTO over India's EV, battery subsidies

China says the incentives provide an 'unfair competitive edge'

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

China has filed a formal complaint against India at the World Trade Organization (WTO), challenging New Delhi's subsidies for electric vehicles (EVs) and battery manufacturing.

The move, confirmed by the Chinese Commerce Ministry, alleges that India's incentives provide an "unfair competitive advantage" to domestic industries and harm China's interests in international trade. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said the ministry would review China's detailed submissions. An official confirmed that China has sought consultations with India under WTO rules, the first step in the dispute settlement process. If unresolved, the case could progress to a WTO panel for adjudication. China has reportedly lodged similar complaints against Turkey, Canada, and the EU. It also warned of taking "firm measures" to protect its

- China has filed a formal complaint against India at the World Trade Organization (WTO), challenging New Delhi's subsidies for electric vehicles (EVs) and battery manufacturing.

domestic industries. The complaint comes amid reports that India may soon launch a National Critical Mineral Stockpile (NCMS) programme to secure rare earth elements critical for EVs and green energy technologies. This initiative follows China's recent export restrictions on these minerals. India's EV push includes generous subsidies: Rs 10,000 per kWh for electric cars (approx. 15 kWh battery) and Rs 20,000 per kWh for e-buses (approx. 250 kWh battery), under the FAME-II scheme. India also introduced the Scheme for Manufacturing of Electric Cars (SMEC) in 2024, offering concessional import duties for foreign firms establishing greenfield EV plants. China, the world's largest EV market, contributed over 1.3 million units last year, almost two-thirds of global sales, according to Rho Motion data. PTI India's trade deficit with China widened to USD 99.2 billion in 2024–25, with imports from China rising to USD 113.45 billion, while exports declined to USD 14.25 billion. —*PTI*

GLITTERS BRIGHTER THAN EVER

Gold soars ₹1,000 to record high of ₹1.31L/10g

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Gold prices surged by Rs 1,000 on Wednesday to hit an all-time high of Rs 1,31,800 per 10 grams in Delhi, driven by robust festive demand and a sharp global rally. This marks the third consecutive session of gains, with jewellers and investors continuing to buy amid strong sentiment.

Gold of 99.9% purity had closed at Rs 1,30,800 on Tuesday, while 99.5% purity gold also rose Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,31,200 per 10 grams, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

However, silver prices saw a sharp correction, dropping Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,82,000 per kg after hitting a record Rs 1,85,000 the previous day. "Gold climbed to record highs on strong global prices and firm domestic demand. The rupee's appreciation capped gains slightly, but bullish momentum remains intact," said Dilip Parmar, Analyst at HDFC Securities.

Globally, spot gold hit a lifetime high of USD 4,218.32 per ounce. Sandip Raichura of PL Capital attributed the surge to continued buying by China, robust ETF and central bank purchases, and heightened geopolitical and economic uncertainty. "Concerns over US-China tensions, the Russia-Ukraine war, a possible US government shutdown, and likely Fed rate cuts are fuelling gold's rally," Raichura added. Spot silver traded at USD 52.84/oz after peaking at USD 53.62. Manav Modi of Motilal Oswal noted safe haven buying and a historic short squeeze were driving silver demand globally. —*PTI*

Hyundai to invest ₹45K cr in India

MUMBAI, 15 OCT

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) has announced a significant investment of Rs 45,000 crore by FY2030 to bolster localisation, expand manufacturing, and drive the next phase of growth in India. The announcement was made during the company's first-ever Investor Day by Jose Munoz, President & CEO of Hyundai Motor Company.

India is set to become Hyundai's second-largest global market by 2030, aligning with the 'Make in India' initiative. Hyundai plans to launch 26 new models, including seven new nameplates, marking its entry into the MPV and off-road SUV segments. It will also produce India's first locally manufactured dedicated electric SUV by 2027 and introduce its luxury brand Genesis the same year. Managing Director Unsoo Kim stated Hyundai aims to reach Rs 1 lakh crore in revenue by FY2030 while maintaining strong double-digit EBITDA margins. Hyundai is also investing in manufacturing innovation via Software Defined Factory models, reinforcing India's role as a export hub. —*PTI*

DATA CENTRE

Google to get ₹22K cr incentives from Andhra

AMARAVATI, 15 OCT

Raiden Infotech India Pvt Ltd, a Google-owned company, will receive Rs 22,000 crore in incentives from the Andhra Pradesh government for setting up data centres in Visakhapatnam and Anakapalli, with a total investment of Rs 87,520 crore. This marks Google's largest-ever investment in India.

The mega project includes the development of over 1,000 MW (1 GW) of data centre capacity in phases. A Government Order confirmed that the State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) has approved a package of incentives capped at Rs 22,002 crore, following cabinet approval on 10 October 2025.

Google, in partnership with Adani Group, will invest USD 15 billion to establish a gigawatt-scale Artificial Intelligence infrastructure hub in Vizag, including the data centre.

As part of the incentives, the government is offering a 25 per cent discount on land at key locations: 160 acres at Rambilli, 120 acres at Adavivaram and Mudasarlova, and 200 acres at Tarluvada. An additional 15 acres will be allotted for a landing cable station.

Other benefits include 100 per cent exemption from stamp duty and registration charges, 10 per cent capital subsidy on plant and machinery for 10 years, and full reimbursement of net SGST on construction (capped at Rs 2,245 crore).

Power will be provided at a Rs 1/unit discount for 15 years, with the Rs 4,800 crore incentive component available for 10 years and extendable by five more upon meeting investment and capacity milestones. —*PTI*

Paytm parent restructures for direct ownership of firms

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Paytm's parent, One 97 Communications Ltd, has approved a major internal restructuring to bring several key financial and technology subsidiaries under direct ownership. The move aims to streamline the corporate structure, enhance transparency, and boost operational efficiency.

As part of the plan, Paytm will acquire 51.22 per cent equity in Paytm Financial Services Limited (PSFL) from founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma and his entity VSS Investco for up to Rs 0.5 crore. This will make PSFL a wholly owned subsidiary. Consequently, PSFL's investee companies — Admirable Software, Mobiquest Mobile Technologies, Urja Money, and Fincollect Services — will also become under One 97 Communications, via direct and indirect ownership.

Further intra-group transactions will consolidate these entities directly under One 97. In FY25, Admirable reported Rs 0.44 crore income, Mobiquest Rs 33.43 crore, Urja Rs 18.59 crore, and Fincollect Rs 220.47 crore. Additionally, Paytm will acquire remaining stakes in Paytm Emerging Tech, Paytm Insuretech, and Paytm Life Insurance from Sharma and his firms for up to Rs 3.52 crore. —*PTI*

Sensex jumps 575 points, Nifty ends above 25,300

MUMBAI, 15 OCT

Benchmark Sensex spurted by 575 points while Nifty closed above 25,300 on Wednesday on buying in banking and financial shares, driven by a rally in Asian and European markets amid hopes of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve later this month.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 575.45 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 82,605.43. During the day, it surged 697.04 points or 0.84 per cent to 82,727.02.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 178.05 points or 0.71 per cent to 25,323.55.

Among Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance and Bajaj Finserv were the biggest gainers. Asian Paints, Larsen & Toubro, Trent, UltraTech Cement, Eternal and Adani Ports were also among the winners.

However, Tata Motors, Infosys, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank were among the laggards.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.18 per cent to USD 62.28 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,508.53 crore on Tuesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors bought stocks worth Rs 3,661.13 crore, according to exchange data. On Tuesday, the Sensex declined 297.07 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 82,029.98. The Nifty dipped by 81.85 points or 0.32 per cent to 25,145.50. —*PTI*

AIRTEL, IBM TO SET UP TWO MULTIZONE CLOUD REGIONS

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Bharti Airtel has announced a strategic partnership with US tech giant IBM to establish two new Multizone Regions (MZRs) for Airtel Cloud in Mumbai and Chennai. The move will expand Airtel Cloud's availability zones in India from four to ten, enhancing its capacity with next-generation, sustainable data centres.

Airtel Vice Chairman and MD Gopal Vittal said the collaboration with IBM will add significant capabilities to Airtel Cloud, enabling support for enterprises migrating from IBM Power Systems and ensuring AI readiness. "These MZRs will address the unique needs of regulated industries like banking, healthcare, and government," he noted.

MZRs involve multiple physically independent data centres in a geographic area, ensuring higher resilience and compliance with data residency laws.

The Airtel-IBM announcement follows Airtel's recent USD 15 billion AI Hub partnership in Andhra Pradesh with Google and AdaniConneX.

Under the new pact, Airtel Cloud customers will be able to access IBM Power Systems portfolio as-a-Service, including the AI-ready IBM Power11 servers. —*PTI*

'TREAT ADULTS LIKE ADULTS'

ChatGPT will soon allow erotica for adults

SAN FRANCISCO, 15 OCT

OpenAI will soon allow a wider range of content, including erotica, on ChatGPT as part of a broader shift to "treat adult users like adults", CEO Sam Altman announced on X (formerly Twitter).

The update, set to roll out in December, will introduce age-gating and offer more human-like chatbot personalities, but "only if users opt in," Altman clarified. The move echoes recent steps by Elon Musk's xAI, which introduced explicit chatbot personas to Grok.

Altman noted that earlier versions of ChatGPT were

deliberately restrictive, especially around mental health topics, to prioritise user safety. The company has since developed tools to mitigate serious risks, enabling it to "safely relax restrictions in most cases".

This policy change comes months after OpenAI was sued by the parents of 16-year-old Adam Raine, who died by suicide. The family alleged ChatGPT failed to prevent harmful interactions and criticised the platform's inadequate parental controls.

Indian-origin Republican politician Vivek Ramaswamy criticised the erotica feature, calling it "troubling" and claiming it would fuel addiction and loneliness rather than improve productivity.

OpenAI did not comment on the developments, but Altman confirmed a more customisable, emotionally responsive version of ChatGPT is also in the works, aimed at enhancing user experience for those who seek it. —*Salar News*

Zepto tops LinkedIn's startups list for 3rd year

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

Quick commerce platform Zepto has once again claimed the top spot on LinkedIn's 2025 Top Startups India list, marking its third consecutive year as the leading emerging company in the country.

Enterprise cloud storage firm Lucidity ranked second, followed by 10-minute food delivery platform Swish in third.

Released on Wednesday, the list identifies startups where careers are most likely to thrive, based on LinkedIn's proprietary data across four criteria: employee growth, member engagement, job interest, and ability to attract top talent. The data was collected between 1 July, 2024 and 30 June, 2025.

The 2025 list reflects the growing dominance of quick commerce, AI-native platforms, and niche fintech solutions in India's startup ecosystem. Beyond Zepto, startups like FirstClub (13) and Snabbit (14) are expanding quick commerce into instant grocery and home services.

AI startups Weekday (4), Convin (6), and LimeChat (19) feature prominently, alongside fintechs Jar (5), Dezerv (16), and CARD91 (18).

Bengaluru leads with nine startups on the list, including all top three. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Kuldeep achieves career-best Test ranking of 14

DUBAI, 15 OCT

India's left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav on Wednesday achieved a career-best rank of 14 in the ICC rankings for Test bowlers following an eight-wicket match haul in the second game against the West Indies in New Delhi. Yadav jumped seven places while West Indies' Jomel Warrican and captain Roston Chase gained two and four places, respectively, to reach 30th and 57th positions. In the batting rankings, India opener Yashaswi Jaiswal advances two slots to fifth after notching 175 in the first innings of the New Delhi game, while KL Rahul's knocks of 38 and 58 not out lifted him two places to 33rd. The West Indies batters to gain are Shai Hope (up 34 places to 66th) and John Campbell (up six places to 68th), who scored centuries in the second innings.—*PTI*

WJ C'ships: Tanvi marches towards medal rounds

GUWAHATI, 15 OCT

Indian shuttlers Tanvi Sharma, Unnati Hooda, and Rakshitha Sree Ramraj overcame some anxious moments to advance to the pre-quarterfinals of the BWF World Junior Championships here on Wednesday.Top seed Tanvi defeated Oei Winarto of Indonesia 15-12, 15-7. Unnati, seeded 8th, beat Alice Wang of USA 15-8, 15-5, and 10th seed Rakshitha recovered from a game down to outwit Singapore's Aaliyah Zakaria 11-15, 15-5, 15-8. While the girls continued their march towards a possible medal, only Gnana Dattu TT will carry India's hopes in the boys' singles category after overcoming 15th seed Suryaksh Rawat 11-15, 15-6, 15-11 in an all-Indian round of 32 at the National Center of Excellence.Also advancing to the next round was the mixed doubles combination of Bhavya Chhabra and Vishakha Toppo.—*PTI*

Shami strikes late after forgettable start

KOLKATA, 15 OCT

Out-of-favor India pacer Mohammed Shami grabbed three wickets in four balls in the fag end of the day to help Bengal bundle out Uttarakhand for 213 on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group C fixture, here on Wednesday.In reply, Bengal made a jittery start as captain and India Test hopeful Abhimanyu Easwaran was dismissed in the first ball.The hosts ended the day at 8 for 1 in five overs, with Sudip Chatterjee (1 batting) and Sudip Kumar Gharami (7 batting) seeing through some anxious moments.Bengal trail Uttarakhand by 205 runs going into the second day. Having made his comeback in the Duleep Trophy earlier this season.—*PTI*

Malaysia appeals FIFA suspensions in eligibility scandal

KUALA LUMPUR, 15 OCT

Malaysia's football federation has appealed FIFA's decision to suspend seven national team players in an eligibility scandal, a news report said Wednesday. The world governing body last month banned the foreign-born players for a year and fined the FA of Malaysia (FAM) $440,000. FIFA accused the FAM of submitting doctored or false documents that said the seven players had Malaysian ancestry, making them eligible to represent the country. —*PTI*

South Africa's 10-match winning streak ends

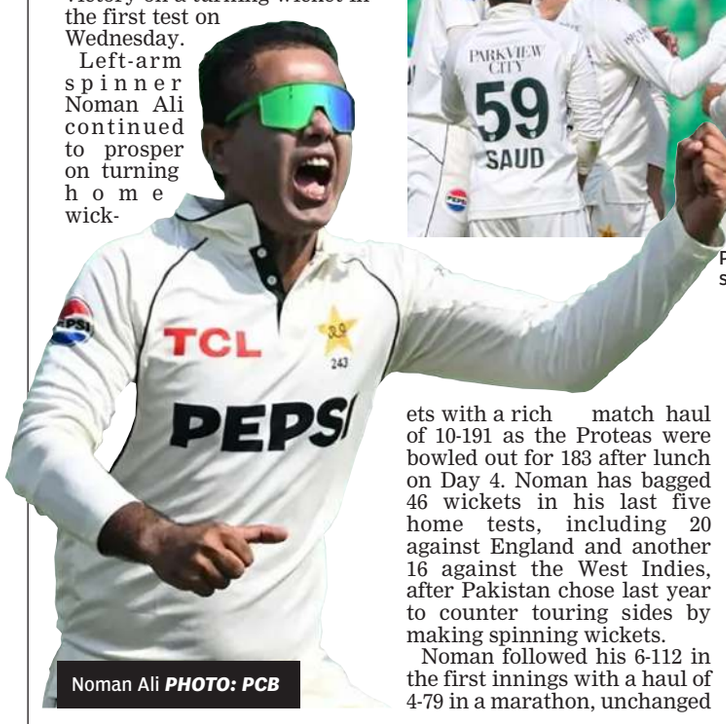
Noman Ali's masterclass helps Pak clinch 93-run victory

LAHORE, 15 OCT

Pakistan ended world test cricket champion South Africa's 10-match winning streak with a clinical 93-run victory on a turning wicket in the first test on Wednesday.

Left-arm spinner Noman Ali continued to prosper on turning home wick-

Pakistan ended world test cricket champion South Africa's 10-match winning streak with a clinical 93-run victory in the first test on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*



Noman Ali *PHOTO: PCB*

ets with a rich match haul of 10-191 as the Proteas were bowled out for 183 after lunch on Day 4. Noman has bagged 46 wickets in his last five home tests, including 20 against England and another 16 against the West Indies, after Pakistan chose last year to counter touring sides by making spinning wickets.

Noman followed his 6-112 in the first innings with a haul of 4-79 in a marathon, unchanged spell of 28 overs, while Shaheen Shah Afridi mopped up the tail with some impressive reverse swing to finish with 4-33, as South Africa fell way short of its 277-run target.

"It's gone exactly to plan," said Pakistan captain Shan Masood, who was also in charge when his team finished bottom of the table in the last World Test Championship cycle.

Pakistan 378 and 167 (Babar 42, Muthusamy 5-57, Harmer 4-51) beat South Africa 269 and 183 (Brevis 54, Rickelton 45, Afridi 4-33, Noman 4-79) by 93 runs —*PTI*

Pakistan moves past India

A 93-run win over defending champions South Africa in Lahore has helped Pakistan kickstart their ICC World Test Championship cycle in style. The win in their opening game of the 2025/27 cycle sees the sub-continent side surge past Bangladesh, England, India, and Sri Lanka to claim the second spot.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Rampant Australia eye another big win over Bangladesh

VISAKHAPATNAM, 15 OCT

Bangladesh vs Australia Match starts at 3.00 pm IST

With an eye on Ellyse Perry's fitness, table-toppers Australia will be in search of another dominating victory over a lowly Bangladesh when the two teams clash here in the Women's World Cup contest on Thursday.

Australia are perched atop the World Cup table with seven points in four matches, with three wins and a washed-out game against Sri Lanka in Colombo, and is coming into this game with a three-wicket triumph over co-hosts India in their last match.

If at all there were any doubts over Australia's form in the competition, Alyssa Healy's side dispelled any such doubts with a world record chase in women's ODIs to announce their intent for a potential eighth title win in the format. Healy led from the front with a belligerent 102-ball 142 laced with 21 fours and three sixes as Australia got over the line scoring 331 for seven with an over to spare, handing the hosts a lot to contemplate while sounding alarm bells for every other opponent in the competition.

India fined for slow over-rate against Australia

India were on Wednesday fined five per cent of their match fees for maintaining a slow over-rate during their Women's ODI World Cup match against Australia here.

India lost the high-scoring contest by three wickets with Australia pulling off a record chase on Sunday in Visakhapatnam.

India's next take on England in a must-win clash on Sunday at Indore.

"Michell Periera of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction as India were ruled to be one over short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration," the ICC said in a statement. —*PTI*

RANJI TROPHY

Padikkal, Karun partnership puts Karnataka in control

BENGALURU, 15 OCT

A blend of youthful ambition and experienced composure was on full display as Devdutt Padikkal (96, 141b, 11x4) and Karun Nair (73, 126b, 9x4) combined to orchestrate a crucial 146-run third-wicket stand steering Karnataka into a solid position against Saurashtra on day one of the 2025–26 Ranji Trophy season opener at the Niranjan Shah Stadium here on Wednesday.

After electing to bat on a bright, sunny morning, Karnataka skipper Mayank Agarwal and S. Nikin Jose quickly came under pressure from the disciplined lines and perfect lengths bowled by Saurashtra's pacers, captain Jaydev Unadkat and Chetan Sakariya.

Padikkal and Karun then took charge, adopting a patient approach to stabilise the innings. The duo rotated the strike effectively to keep the scoreboard ticking. Once settled, the pair began to score freely, consistently piercing

Karnataka's Devdutt Padikkal and Karun Nair in action during 1st day of the Ranji Trophy match *PHOTO: PTI*

the gaps and turning the pressure back onto the home side.

Padikkal punished anything short with delicate cuts and powerful pulls, while Karun skilfully maneuvered the strike as both batters soon celebrated their half-centuries.

Ishan Kishan starts campaign with a hundred

Jharkhand captain Ishan Kishan lifted his team from a tricky situation with a statement hundred as the visitors reached 307 for six against hosts Tamil Nadu on day one of the Ranji Trophy season here on Wednesday.

Kishan, who has lost his place in the Indian team across formats, was batting on an unbeaten 125 off 183 alongside Sahil Raj (64 batting) at close of play. —*PTI*

India loses 2-4 to Australia

JOHOR, 15 OCT

SULTAN OF JOHOR CUP

The Indian junior men's hockey team suffered its first defeat in the ongoing Sultan of Johor Cup, going down to Australia 2-4 in a pool match here on Wednesday.

India will next play Malaysia on 17 October. Captain Rohit (22nd minute) and Arshdeep Singh (60th minute) scored for India while Oscar Sproule (39th, 42nd), Andrew Patrick (40th), and captain Dylan Downey (51st) were on target for Australia. India is placed second with seven points from four games, having won two, drawn one, and lost a game. Australia is leading the table with 10 points from four outings. India dominated possession in the first quarter after some early hiccups. A brilliant save by Prince Deep Singh in the initial moments was followed by India hardly putting a foot wrong in the first 15 minutes.

The second quarter saw India win the first penalty corner in the 17th minute, but Anmol Ekka's flick had too much power and went over the post.

In the 22nd minute, India won another penalty corner, but this time it was successfully converted by the team's leading goalscorer Rohit with a low strike. Amir Ali came close to extending the lead in the 25th minute after making a strong solo run from the left. —*PTI*

NORWAY CHESS ORGANISERS LAUNCH WORLD C'SHIP TOUR

NEW DELHI, 15 OCT

The organisers of Norway Chess on Wednesday announced the launch of the Total Chess World Championship Tour, which will consist of four events each year and crown a combined champion across three disciplines - Fast Classic, Rapid, and Blitz chess.

Norway Chess CEO Kjell Madland told PTI that a long-term agreement has been signed with the International Chess Federation (FIDE) for the tournament, which will be an annual affair and begin in 2027.

"We expect this (Total Chess World Championship Tour) to become one of the most prestigious events in

the entire chess calendar," said Madland.

He said that the World Championships, which are held in the Classical format, and the newly-conceptualized Total Chess World Championship Tour will complement each other as it had been officially approved by FIDE.

"The tour will consist of four tournaments per year in various global cities with a minimum USD 2.7 million annual prize pool across the Tour (USD 750k per event for the first three events; USD 450k for the Finals, plus performance bonuses," Madland added.

"A pilot tournament is planned for the fall of 2026, with the first full championship season beginning in 2027," he said. The status agreement between Norway Chess and FIDE was signed in early October.

"The vision of the Total Chess World Championship Tour is to find the player who best masters the disciplines Fast Classic, Rapid, and Blitz combined. Fast Classic is an innovation of classical chess, featuring a time limit as short as 45 minutes.

This will receive a rating (the same way) as classical chess," he said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Satwik-Chirag enter 2nd round of Denmark Open

ODENSE, 15 OCT

Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty survived a scare before progressing to the men's doubles second round with a thrilling win over Scotland's Christopher Grimley and Matthew Grimley at the Denmark Open Super 750 tournament here on Wednesday.

Satwik and Chirag, who reached back-to-back finals at the Hong Kong Open and China Masters, rallied from a game down to beat Christopher and Matthew 17-21, 21-11, 21-17 in their opening match.

The sixth-seeded Indian pair, who claimed their second World Championships bronze earlier this year in Paris, will next face Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan.

In men's singles, Lakshya Sen made a winning start to his campaign with a hard-fought 10-21, 21-8, 21-18 victory over Ireland's Nhat Nguyen.

The 24-year-old from Almora, who finished fourth at the Olympics and recently reached the Hong Kong Super 500 final, will meet either second seed Anders Antonsen of Denmark or Indonesia's Anthony Ginting in the next round.

In mixed doubles, the Indian pair of Mohit Jaglan and Lakshita Jaglan went down 14-21, 11-21 to Indonesia's Adnan Maulana and Indah Cahya Sari Jamil in the opening round. —*PTI*

FABIO PARATICI RETURNS TO TOTTENHAM

LONDON, 15 OCT

Tottenham announced the full-time return of Fabio Paratici to the Premier League team on Wednesday, as one of two sporting directors, 2½ years after his departure amid a false accounting trial at his former club, Juventus.

Paratici was one of the officials handed bans from soccer activities when Juventus was hit with a 15-point penalty following an investigation by Turin public prosecutors into alleged false bookkeeping.

Paratici received a 30-month ban by Italian sports authorities that was extended worldwide by FIFA and upheld in 2023 following his appeal leading to his exit from Tottenham, where he was the club's managing director at the time.—*PTI*

Fabio *PHOTO: X/@ PL*

ODI SERIES

Last chance to see Virat and Rohit: Cummins

SYDNEY, 15 OCT

Australia captain Pat Cummins said on Wednesday that the ODI series against India starting on Sunday in Perth is special as it might be the "last chance" for fans Down Under to catch a glimpse of superstars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in this country.

Senior stars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma were among the first batch of Indian cricketers who flew off on Wednesday for a three-match ODI series against Australia beginning 19 October.

The 32-year-old Cummins would be watching the action unfold from the sidelines due to a back injury. "Virat and Rohit have been part of almost every Indian side for the last 15 years, so this might be the last chance for the Australian public to see them playing out here," Cummins told 'JioHotstar'.

"They've obviously been champions of the game for India and are always very well supported. Whenever we play them, the crowd gets loud," he added.

Pat Cummins *PHOTO: PTI*

The premier pacer said he is disappointed about missing the series that will also feature games in Adelaide and Sydney. It will be followed by a five-match T20 International series from 29 October."It's a shame to miss the white-ball series against India. I think the crowds are going to be huge. There's already a lot of excitement built up here in Australia," he said. "So, whenever you miss a game, it's disappointing. But missing a big series like this is always a bit harder to take," he added.

Nonetheless, he offered his take on the approach that Australia should follow under stand-in captain Mitchell Marsh.

"It's three matches you want to win, but it's also about giving exposure to the younger guys coming through, particularly those who weren't part of the last World Cup. —*PTI*

Messi gets two assists, Argentina beats Rico 6-0

FLORIDA, 15 OCT

Lionel Messi had two assists and helped start a play that led to another goal, as reigning World Cup champion Argentina beat Puerto Rico 6-0 in a relocated international friendly on Tuesday night.

The match was originally scheduled to be played on Monday in Chicago, before promoters moved the game last week. Officials in Chicago said low ticket sales were to blame; officials with the Argentine soccer federation said the immigration crackdown in Chicago was responsible.

Playing on the field he calls home with Inter Miami in Major League Soccer, Messi flicked a quick lob to set up Gonzalo Montiel's score in the first half and then had a nifty back pass that created Lautaro Martínez's second goal of the night in the 83rd minute. Alexis Mac Allister had two goals for Argentina, which also benefited from an own goal midway through the second half. —*PTI*

Lionel Messi *PHOTO: X/@MESSI*